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*The Political Thought of the Irish  
Revolution*

The Irish Revolution was a pivotal moment of transition for Ireland, the United Kingdom, and British Empire. A constitutional crisis that crystallised in 1912 electrified opinion in Ireland whilst dividing politics at Westminster. Instead of settling these differences, the advent of the First World War led to the emergence of new antagonisms. Republican insurrection was followed by a struggle for independence along with the partition of the island. This volume assembles some of the key contributions to the intellectual debates that took place in the midst of these changes and displays the vital ideas developed by the men and women who made the Irish Revolution, as well as those who opposed it. Through these fundamental texts, we see Irish experiences in comparative European and international contexts, and how the revolution challenged the durability of Britain as a global power.

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# *The Political Thought of the Irish Revolution*

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## Introduction

### The Character of the Conflict

During the seven-month long caretaker ministry headed by Lord Salisbury beginning in June 1885, William Ewart Gladstone converted to home rule. The measure was intended to pacify Ireland, which had been shaken by waves of agrarian unrest and a series of ‘Fenian’ outrages over recent decades. The first Home Rule Bill, introduced by Gladstone in the House of Commons on 8 April 1886, was supported with reservations by the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster, Charles Stewart Parnell, but vehemently opposed by the Conservatives and a section of Gladstone’s Liberals. There were riots in Belfast in response to the proposals, though on 8 June the Bill was defeated by a margin of thirty votes. Over the next thirty-five years, the issue would prove divisive inside the United Kingdom parliament and polarise opinion out of doors. In Ireland itself, it added an extra dimension of strife to existing divisions.

Gladstone’s new departure is often seen as inaugurating an era of rigid antagonism in Irish politics. An enduring cleavage is assumed to have emerged and to have lasted beyond partition and the War of Independence down to and including the Northern Ireland Troubles of 1968–98. This picture, however, has always involved considerable simplification. The idea of compact ideological structures spanning the twentieth century is far-fetched. Even the period of the Irish Revolution covered by this book cannot accurately be described as a monolithic struggle. Circumstances changed, the debate evolved, and commitments were gradually revised. This volume offers testimony to these dynamic shifts in allegiance and the unfolding conditions that shaped them. While it is

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obvious that animosity could run deep, it is also clear that hostilities were not uniform across time. The image of smouldering communal hatreds periodically reignited is an artful but distorting literary construction. Despite the distortion, the historiography of the period regularly depicts developments in terms of an abiding contest between nationalism and unionism.<sup>1</sup> Political scientists, and later journalists, have tended to follow suit, delineating a series of variable conflicts as a collision between fixed positions defined with reference to rival affiliations. This misrepresentation has been further contorted by the academic tendency to portray political loyalties by resort to the catch-all concept of identity.<sup>2</sup>

The attempt to schematise Irish history as a standoff between the discrete edifices of nationalism and unionism is reductive in two ways. First, unionism, like nationalism, denominates a form of allegiance. On that basis, both forms of attachment are 'nationalist' in character. Where they differ is in the object of their allegiance, and in each case the object was progressively redefined. Moreover, both are also best regarded as forms of democratic nationalism. Schisms over the future shape of a prospective Irish polity took place as the constitutional monarchies of Europe were challenged by democratic movements, and in due course undermined by recourse to democratic procedures. As these forces gained momentum over the course of the First World War, they exercised a steadily disintegrating effect on existing political structures. Empires fell, and governments were re-configured, as democratic norms secured an ascendancy over fading values.

A gradual transformation of the United Kingdom began earlier: franchise reform, extra-parliamentary party organisation and the rise of charismatic leadership were under way there before these processes proved decisive in central Europe.<sup>3</sup> Max Weber took Gladstone to have perfected

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1982, rev. 1995); Roy Foster, 'Something to Hate: Intimate Enmities in Irish History', *The Irish Review*, 30 (Spring-Summer 2003), pp. 1–12; Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> See for example Charles Townshend, 'Religion, War and Identity in Ireland', *The Journal of Modern History*, 76: 4 (December 2004), pp. 882–902.

<sup>3</sup> These processes are examined in Gary W. Cox, *The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Eugenio F. Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

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a new species of ‘demagogy’; for A. V. Dicey he was a ‘born enthusiast’.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, parliamentary representatives were increasingly drawn from the professional classes. Irish MPs were the first to be paid a stipend. The figure of the gentleman–politician was no longer fully dominant. Georges Sorel marvelled at Parnell’s brand of agitational democracy, which piled on parliamentary pressure by a ‘few acts of violence’.<sup>5</sup> Less insidiously, the abolition of the Lords veto in 1911 was yet another step in the disappearance of government by estates. With the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1884, parliamentarism was challenged by an expanded electorate.<sup>6</sup> In Ireland, the number of men eligible to vote suddenly doubled to 500,000, many of whom were small farmers.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the Irish Parliamentary Party was disciplined by an effective machine: the Irish National League expanded its network of branches throughout the country, candidates were vetted by the Party leadership, and MPs obliged to take a pledge. Although it is true that a far more extensive franchise was granted in 1918, the passage of the 1884 Act on the back of widening the suffrage in 1867 looked like a clear pattern, and commentators viewed the United Kingdom as approximating a democracy based on the existence of a mass voting public.<sup>8</sup> ‘Up to 1895 English statesmen themselves did not, in general, fully appreciate the character of the revolution which they themselves had carried

<sup>4</sup> Max Weber, ‘The Profession and Vocation of Politics’ (1919) in *Weber: Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Spiers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 242; A. V. Dicey, *A Fool’s Paradise: Being a Constitutionalist’s Criticism of the Home Rule Bill of 1912* (London: John Murray, 1913), p. xxi.

<sup>5</sup> Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, ed. Jeremy Jennings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> On ‘parliamentarism’ as a distinct constitutional form that prevailed between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries in Britain and France, see William Selinger, *Parliamentarism from Burke to Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); on the challenges faced by parliamentary liberalism after 1884–6, see Jon Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), ch. 12.

<sup>7</sup> On the impact of this see Margaret O’Callaghan, ‘Franchise Reform, “First Past the Post” and the Strange Case of Unionist Ireland’, *Parliamentary History*, 16: 1 (February 1997), pp. 85–106, p. 105: ‘1884 to 1885 made 1886 possible. Irish nationalist electoral power paved the way for Gladstonian action.’

<sup>8</sup> On these developments see Robert Saunders, *Democracy and the Vote in British Politics, 1848–1867: The Making of the Second Reform Act* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Andrew Jones, *The Politics of Reform, 1884* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Robert Blackburn, ‘Laying the Foundations of the Modern Voting System: The Representation of the People Act 1918’, *Parliamentary History*, 30: 1 (2011), pp. 33–52.

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through by legislation extending from 1866 to 1884', observed Dicey.<sup>9</sup> Irish politics advanced in the shadow of these developments. Citizenship was democratised in the midst of social inequalities and the means of political struggle was opened to the nation. National rights, from this point on, were framed as democratic rights.

This brings us to the second interpretative framework that has encouraged a reductive approach to the period. While it is important, as already indicated, to appreciate what Irish nationalism and unionism had in common, it is also vital to appreciate the differences on either side. Animosity, in other words, was not binary. Opposing political persuasions were not formed into rival camps whose integrity persisted impervious to change. Nationalism, like unionism, did not comprise a single doctrine. While politics was polarising, opinion remained diverse. Antagonisms, therefore, were not static in content. The nature of the discord altered even as the fact of opposition endured. The terms of contention formed and reformed; fresh antipathies emerged inside rival positions. Given this underlying flux, it is at least understandable that the career of Irish unionism culminated in a form of home rule in the North; that large sections within nationalism converted to republicanism in the South; and that secession from the United Kingdom led to civil war.

### Narrative of Events

In the face of these historical ironies, the train of events following on from the failure of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886 might usefully be recapitulated here. In 1891 the Irish Unionist Alliance was formed under Colonel Edward Saunderson. The organisation built upon the southern-based Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, which had been formed in 1885 to promote collaboration between Liberals and Conservatives with a view to securing seats for pro-Union candidates at elections. The Alliance, which operated across all four provinces of Ireland, won considerable support in the House of Lords; it also attracted the future unionist leader Edward Carson into its ranks, along with the co-operative pioneer Horace Plunkett. On 17 June 1892, as opposition to home rule gained momentum, the Ulster Unionist Convention assembled 12,300 delegates in the Botanic Gardens in Belfast at the instigation of the Liberal unionist

<sup>9</sup> Dicey, *Fool's Paradise*, p. xxviii.

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Thomas Sinclair to demonstrate their opposition to the creation of an Irish parliament. The Convention brought together an assortment of protestant creeds and classes reflecting the complexity of the coalition that would soon be marshalled in defence of the existing Union, particularly in the north-east of Ulster.<sup>10</sup> Devotees of the cause assembled to reject the devolution of legislative power to a band of representatives that included supporters of land agitation, many of them supposedly captivated by Roman Catholic clerical influence.

As Irish unionism grew more organised, the Irish Parliamentary Party fell into disarray. News of Parnell's adulterous relationship with Katherine O'Shea turned both Gladstone and the Catholic hierarchy against his leadership. The Party split in 1891, fomenting bitterness, and radically diminishing its influence as a force in Westminster politics until the general elections of 1910. Despite his faltering alliance with the Irish Party on account of the O'Shea scandal, Gladstone pursued a second Home Rule Bill, which passed in the Commons on 1 September 1893 by 30 votes, but was resoundingly defeated in the Lords by a margin of 378. The Irish Parliamentary Party would not recover its cohesion until John Redmond acceded to its leadership in 1900. In the interim, Irish policy at Westminster was channelled into 'constructive unionism', supported at the same time by coercive legislation.<sup>11</sup> The first sign of this change in direction came with the establishment by Arthur Balfour, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, of the Congested Districts Board in 1891 to alleviate poverty and halt emigration from the west of Ireland. This was followed by a series of measures introduced under a coalition government of Conservative and Liberal unionists that held office for a decade from 1895 to make the constitutional status quo appealing to Irish opinion. These measures included the extension of the tenant right to purchase property under the 1896 Land Act, although William O'Brien's United Irish League continued to agitate for land redistribution with a view to reallocating the uncultivated grasslands of the central plains to tenants and landless labourers based in Connaught. Two years later the introduction of a system of elected councils broke the stranglehold of the landlord class on local government.

<sup>10</sup> Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), ch. 6

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Gailey, *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The Experience of Constructive Unionism 1890–1905* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987).

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The Conservative pursuit of political and social reform while sidelining the question of legislative devolution culminated in the 1903 Wyndham Land Act. The legislation extended opportunities for tenants to purchase farmland on a subsidised basis through a grant of government loans. The programme was expanded in 1909 with the result that by 1921 more than 310,000 former tenants had bought holdings from landlords amounting to nearly 12 million acres. The impact on the social structure of Ireland, with significant implications for its politics, was dramatic. Improvement became a watchword of policy, with ‘conciliation’ an expected consequence. The spirit of constructive amelioration proved controversial but still edged forward. A Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction was established in 1900, drainage schemes as well as labour reforms were promoted, and there were plans for founding a Catholic university and overhauling public administration. All the while, the Liberal Party skirted the question of home rule as the Irish Party lost its momentum. But just when the great constitutional cause subsided, cultural innovation revived. From Horace Plunkett to James Joyce the prevailing mood was described in terms of spiritual ‘paralysis’, but in truth the enervation afflicted Members of Parliament while ‘the rehabilitation of Ireland from within’ – as Plunkett put it – began to blossom.<sup>12</sup>

For Plunkett rehabilitation was based on ‘a new philosophy of Irish progress’, which had come to express itself through a variety of projects.<sup>13</sup> The new strain of thought amounted to a programme of self-reliance: ‘a profound revolution in the thoughts of Ireland about herself’.<sup>14</sup> This took multiple forms, from the co-operative movement championed by Plunkett to an array of schemes for cultural rejuvenation spanning language, sport, journalism, literature, and drama.<sup>15</sup> The Gaelic League, founded in 1893 with Douglas Hyde as its first president, was among the most consequential developments. Looking back in 1913, Patrick Pearse described the League as ‘a prophet and more than a prophet’. It was, for him, ‘the beginning of the Irish Revolution’.<sup>16</sup> In a lecture delivered on 25 November 1892 outlining the potential dividends to be derived from promoting the Irish language, Hyde also sought to advertise the virtues of Anglo-Irish literature: ‘Every house should have a copy of

<sup>12</sup> James Joyce, *Letters*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (Faber and Faber: London, 1957), p. 55; Horace Plunkett, *Ireland in the New Century* (John Murray: London, 1904), pp. 148–9.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.      <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Erskine Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule*, below p. 66.

<sup>16</sup> Patrick Pearse, *The Coming Revolution* (1913), below p. 186.

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Moore and Davis.<sup>17</sup> Hyde further remarked that even though the Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini had detected the decline of Irish nationality, language revival and the reformation of taste would resuscitate a disappearing ‘Celtic’ culture that could appeal across religious and political divisions.<sup>18</sup> Only by means of a such a revival, Hyde thought, could the seemingly pathological impulse to disparage England, whilst at the same time neglecting domestic traditions, be made to cease. Native resources would become a national fund.

Competition to define the character of this new race ensued. W. B. Yeats contributed to the struggle with the establishment of the National Literary Society in 1892, before which Hyde had delivered his address on ‘The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland’. In 1899, together with Augusta Gregory, George Moore, and Edward Martyn, Yeats also founded the Irish Literary Theatre as a vehicle for disseminating ‘ancient idealism’.<sup>19</sup> Earlier, various endeavours to reappropriate past cultural treasures through folklore and history – or a mixture of both – had been pursued by figures like Standish O’Grady. For Yeats the strategy found echoes in Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* and Richard Wagner’s *Parsifal*.<sup>20</sup> But as the National Literary Revival proceeded, the fashion for recovering superannuated customs in the hope of reshaping social attitudes drew criticism from numerous quarters. Yeats himself would progress through various stages in his renunciation of existing conditions by appeal to *faux-patrician* values, culminating in his rejection of ‘this filthy modern tide’.<sup>21</sup> But, more immediately, strands of criticism began to assail the would-be guardians of an ancient Ireland. John Eglinton charged the revivalists’ penchant for re-purposing archaic legends with evading modern life, while D. P. Moran accused them of ignorance and remoteness.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Hyde, ‘The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland’ (1892) in Charles Gavan Duffy, George Sigerson, and Douglas Hyde, *The Revival of Irish Literature and Other Addresses* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1904), p. 159.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119. On membership of the League, see Timothy G. McMahon, *Grand Opportunity: The Gaelic Revival and Irish Society, 1893–1910* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), ch. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Augusta Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre: A Chapter of Autobiography* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1913), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> W. B. Yeats, ‘A Note on National Drama’ in John Eglinton, W. B. Yeats, and A. C. Larminie, *Literary Ideals in Ireland* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899).

<sup>21</sup> W. B. Yeats, ‘The Statues’ (1938) in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1950), p. 376.

<sup>22</sup> John Eglinton, ‘What Should Be the Subjects of a National Drama’ in John Eglinton et al., *Literary Ideals in Ireland*; D. P. Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1905).

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Alongside the National Literary Society in Dublin, there existed the Irish Literary Society in London. Several other associations prospered as well. William Rooney and Arthur Griffith's Leinster Literary Society formed the basis for the subsequent Celtic Literary Society which promoted the cause of independence together with Irish civilisation. Maud Gonne, a radical nationalist member of the Celtic Literary Society, founded Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland) in 1900 as a women's organisation devoted to advancing Irish separatism. Helena Molony, Mary MacSwiney, Constance Markiewicz, and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington were all members.<sup>23</sup> Molony, a feminist and labour activist, edited the organisation's monthly newspaper, *Bean na hÉireann* (Woman of Ireland), while Rooney and Griffith edited the *United Irishman*. They also created Cumann na nGaedheal (Society of the Gaels) as an umbrella organisation under which assorted nationalist movements could be grouped. At the 1902 Cumann na nGaedheal convention, Griffith proposed the adoption of a policy of abstention for Irish MPs at Westminster. The approach was also adopted by the National Council, formed by Gonne and Griffith to protest against the royal visit of King Edward VII in 1903. When the National Council's first annual convention took place on 28 November 1905, it adopted what was now termed the Sinn Féin policy of abstentionism, which Griffith had elaborated in the pages of the *United Irishman*, into a theory of passive resistance that aimed at the establishment of a dual monarchy on the model of the 1867 Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich*. In 1907 the National Council merged with Cumann na nGaedheal and the republican, paramilitary-backed Dungannon Clubs to form the Sinn Féin Party, committed to Griffith's 'Hungarian' policy.<sup>24</sup>

For many of these activists and commentators, an intellectual revolution had already occurred before the political upheavals that would erupt after 1912 – a general 'stir of thought' had surfaced, as Yeats famously put it, or a 'mouvement intellectuel' in the words of J. M. Synge.<sup>25</sup> The scene shifted from wrangling at Westminster to the cultivation of 'Irish Ideas', a clamour over 'ideals and principles', and hopes for a spiritual

<sup>23</sup> Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), ch. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), ch. 1.

<sup>25</sup> W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 559; J. M. Synge, 'Le Mouvement intellectuel Irlandais', *L'Européen*, 31 May 1902, in *Collected Works II: Prose*, ed. Alan Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).



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‘awakening’.<sup>26</sup> The revolution in thought is commonly described as a retreat from politics into art.<sup>27</sup> In truth the reorientation involved a rejection less of politics than of parliamentarism specifically. In his Introduction to the English translation of L. Paul Dubois’ *L’Irlande contemporaine*, Thomas Kettle relayed the general ‘outcry against parliamentarianism’.<sup>28</sup> That mood of scepticism was implicit in the founding of Sinn Féin and was still present in the late writings of James Connolly.<sup>29</sup> Michael Davitt regarded parliamentary procedures as under assault from the autocratic tendencies fostered by overseas expansion: ‘In Great Britain, parliamentarism or imperialism must die.’<sup>30</sup> Electoral campaigning naturally persisted, but increasing resources of energy were focused on cultural revitalisation, much of this originally in a spirit of ecumenism. The ambition still remained one of political transformation – or, at least, of moral rebirth with vaguely projected political consequences. Perhaps inevitably, the spirit of inclusion steadily dwindled. Many, like Hyde, sustained the goal of transcending ecclesiastical and party-political sectionalism; however, intellectual experimentation bred its own differences and, before long, for every scheme encouraging national renewal there appeared a critique espousing an alternative vision.

George Bernard Shaw, for one, came to regard what he termed the ‘neo-Gaelic’ movement with a mixture of incredulity and disdain.<sup>31</sup> The aspiration to revive the Irish language, he thought, was quixotic and counter-productive, and the literary renaissance as conceived by Yeats seemed little more than ‘a quaint little offshoot of English

<sup>26</sup> William O’Brien, *Irish Ideas* (London: Longmans, Green, 1893); Æ (George Russell) to Yeats, 1 June 1896 in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, ed. Seamus Deane (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991), 3 vols., II, p. 341; Stephen Gwynn, *Today and Tomorrow in Ireland: Essays on Irish Subjects* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1903); Markiewicz, *Women, Ideals and the Nation*, below p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Brian Ó Conchubhair, ‘The Culture War: The Gaelic League and Irish Ireland’ and Roy Foster, ‘The Irish Literary Revival’ in Thomas Bartlett ed., *The Cambridge History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), IV.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas M. Kettle, ‘Introduction’ to L. Paul Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1908), p. ix.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Griffith, ‘Preface to the Third Edition’, *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland, with Appendices on Pitt’s Policy and Sinn Féin* (Dublin: Whelan and Son, 1918), p. x; James Connolly, ‘What Is a Free Nation?’, below p. 229.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland, or The Story of the Land League Revolution* (London and New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904), p. 723.

<sup>31</sup> George Bernard Shaw, ‘Preface for Politicians’ in *John Bull’s Other Island and Major Barbara* (New York: Brentano’s, 1907), p. v.

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pre-Raphaelitism' which appealed to national sentiment for leverage.<sup>32</sup> As with all instances of cultural and political idealism, the true character of such idealism was revealed in its secular ambition, yet for all that it remained ill-adapted to existing circumstances. Despite his own rejection of compulsive Irish nostalgia, Joyce was more sympathetic to the yearning for a new civilisation that would purge the country at once of Anglo-Saxon democracy and the Roman Catholic imperium.<sup>33</sup> An appeal to the past would not revive the old 'Hellas of the north', nor free it from the burdens of past failure and betrayal.<sup>34</sup> The hope of renovation could only be redeemed by bringing forth the 'uncreated conscience' of the 'race'.<sup>35</sup>

Although these calls for renewal were marked by their diversity, there were commonalities in the midst of this heterogeneity. Newfangled appeals to Celticism and cosmopolitanism alike spurned earlier characterisations of the Celtic mind. Theodor Mommsen had notoriously depicted the Celts as fundamentally incapable of political exertion.<sup>36</sup> Then, from Ernest Renan to Matthew Arnold, with assorted ends in view, a stream of portraits of the dreamy and ineffectual Celt poured forth.<sup>37</sup> Rebuffing this condescension, a procession of Irish publicists nonetheless urged opposition to 'Saxon' values. In this venture they had available to them a rich British tradition, epitomised by John Ruskin, of castigating the 'utilitarianism' of modern culture. Gandhi, likewise drawing on Ruskin, was still operating within this framework when in 1910 in *Hind Swaraj* he pleaded for the replacement of functional market relations by what he termed 'true' civilisation.<sup>38</sup> With a system of mass education in place in virtually every country in Europe by the start of the First World War, the creation and dissemination of cultural attitudes mattered. The

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. xxxvi.

<sup>33</sup> James Joyce, 'James Clarence Mangan' (1907), *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. E. Mason and R. Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1964).

<sup>34</sup> James Joyce, 'Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages' (1907) in *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914–15), ed. Seamus Deane (Harmondsworth: Penguin: 1992) p. 276.

<sup>36</sup> Theodor Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* (Leipzig: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1854–6), 3 vols., III, p. 285.

<sup>37</sup> Seamus Deane, 'Arnold, Burke and the Celts' in *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985); Seamus Deane, "'Masked with Matthew Arnold's Face': Joyce and Liberalism', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 12: 1 (June 1986), pp. 11–22.

<sup>38</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. A. J. Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2nd ed. 2009), ch. 13.

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1870 Foster Act laid the foundations of elementary schooling in England and Wales. Compulsory enrolment then arrived in 1880 and was duly introduced in Ireland twelve years later. Through the nineteenth century, the Irish language declined and literacy in English spread.<sup>39</sup> The number of Catholics in secondary education more than doubled between the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 and the passage of the 1911 Parliament Act. The Royal University of Ireland was founded in 1880 and soon permitted students from the Catholic University, the forebear of University College Dublin, to take degrees. Thomas Kettle, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Patrick Pearse, Éamon de Valera, Douglas Hyde, Eoin MacNeill, and James Joyce were among its earliest graduates. As education expanded, the reading public was enlarged, with audiences for literature, journalism, and more popular forms of entertainment increasing. In 1906 Stephen Gwynn, Joseph Hone, and George Roberts founded Maunsel and Company, a publishing house committed to the publication of Irish writers.

Given these developments, public opinion took on a vital significance, particularly as voting rights were extended. The North of Ireland Women's Suffrage Society was formed in 1872 and the Irish Women's Franchise League in 1912. The vote for women over the age of thirty with the requisite property qualifications did not arrive until 1918, with an equal franchise introduced by the new Irish parliament in 1922, although local suffrages at parish and district levels were granted to women at the end of the nineteenth century. The Local Government Act of 1898 extended the system of administration in operation in Britain to Ireland and in the process gave the vote to 100,000 women in council elections. A decade later they were made eligible to become candidates themselves.<sup>40</sup> The following year Markiewicz noted that women until recently stood 'far removed from all politics', comparing the situation in Ireland with the prominent role they played in radical movements in Russia and Poland.<sup>41</sup> Among men and women, enfranchised citizens were drawn into the battle of ideas. Where the public was invited to embrace new values in the

<sup>39</sup> The importance of literacy to the conceptualisation of citizenship is discussed in Ernest Gellner, 'Nationalism' in *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 159; on assorted European campaigns for linguistic and cultural revival see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983), ch. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Pařeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>41</sup> Constance Markiewicz, *Women, Ideals and the Nation*, below p. 7.

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guise of 'Irishness', these ideals were generally conceived in opposition to the spirit of selfishness, frequently connected to the commercial avarice of the seat of empire.

Egoism of the kind had of course also been subject to a series of indictments in Britain from Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle to Matthew Arnold and William Morris.<sup>42</sup> The grim forecasts that accompanied debate about the 'Condition of England' encouraged an appeal to restorative romanticism. In Ireland, as materialism similarly came to be denounced, it was often correlated with imperialism. Along with this, industrialism and individualism were castigated. So too was political trimming since it connoted the affairs of parliament. In place of all this, heroism was lauded; or, at least, passion and idealism were. These favoured mental dispositions implied at once authenticity and a degree of spiritualism. In Pearse, Yeats, and Connolly the resulting mindset involved extolling integrity and selflessness. The principle of nationality, according to Kettle, presupposed a capacity for 'sacrifice'.<sup>43</sup> For Markiewicz altruism depended in the end on a 'genius for sacrifice'.<sup>44</sup> A refurbished worldview awaited a new epoch. 'England has laboured to anglicize Ireland', observed the Earl of Dunraven in 1907.<sup>45</sup> The venture, he thought, had consistently failed. Native solutions, it was claimed all round, were required to tackle the problem of Ireland. There were echoes in this approach of Henry Sumner Maine's insistence after the Sepoy Rebellion in India on maintaining customary forms of life in traditional societies.<sup>46</sup> However, in the case of Ireland, reclaimed traditions were used as vehicles to disavow commercial civilisation even if the origins of the principles being promoted lay in a critique of metropolitan capitalism.

Clearly this project of ethical atonement was poorly designed to accommodate the qualities of 'thrift and industry' that Plunkett had observed admiringly in the north-east of Ulster.<sup>47</sup> There had been many visions of 'two nations' internally dividing both Britain and Ireland from the middle

<sup>42</sup> Donald Winch, *Wealth and Life: Essays on the Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1848–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> Thomas M. Kettle, 'The Economics of Nationalism', below p. 148.

<sup>44</sup> Markiewicz, *Women, Ideals and the Nation*, below p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Earl of Dunraven, *The Outlook in Ireland: The Case for Devolution and Conciliation* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1907), p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland in the New Century*, p. 120.

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of the nineteenth century. Benjamin Disraeli's 1845 *Sybil, or The Two Nations* was just one instance of a celebrated genre. The line of cleavage was variously drawn along the fault-lines of class and culture. For Paul Dubois there existed 'two Irelands' – 'two opposed nations' – defined in terms of settler and native and distributed across the island as a whole.<sup>48</sup> Six years later, W. F. Money Penny declared in a pamphlet on home rule that, notwithstanding the existence of a large 'Protestant democracy' in Ulster, the partition of Ireland into 'two nations' corresponded to 'no real geographical line of division'. Instead, rival constituencies were parcelled into 'separate religions, separate ideals, separate traditions, and separate affinities' right across the territory.<sup>49</sup>

But the schism that would ultimately prove decisive was that between the 'north-east' and the 'south and west'. The topographical distinction was substantiated in terms of sundry contrasts – between Orange and Green, Presbyterian and Catholic, industry and indolence, or an amalgamation of each. For Thomas Macknight back in 1896 the main fissure in Ireland was captured by the contrasting reactions in Dublin and Belfast to the assassination of senior British political officials in the Phoenix Park in 1882.<sup>50</sup> The disparity suggested, he concluded, the existence of 'two antagonistic populations, two different nations on Irish soil'.<sup>51</sup> Plunkett, on the other hand, entertained the hope of harmony driven by the 'fruitful contact of North and South'. Toward this end, both extremes needed to modulate their characters. Protestant Ireland, the 'home of the strictly civic virtues and efficiencies', ought to purge accumulated bigotries while Catholic Ireland had to shake itself from lethargy. Both could equally embrace creativity and self-help.<sup>52</sup> This hybridisation would implicitly combine tradition and innovation, retrospect and modernity. The prospect put Plunkett in mind of Westernisation in Japan with the qualification that the Irish bid to forge 'a civilisation of their own' appeared at once more significant and interesting.<sup>53</sup>

As the British government pursued a policy of assuaging Ireland with constructive legislation, it faced what was often deemed 'another

<sup>48</sup> Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland*, pp. 89 ff.

<sup>49</sup> W. F. Money Penny, *The Two Irish Nations: An Essay on Home Rule* (London: John Murray, 1913), p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Macknight, *Ulster as It Is, or Twenty-Eight Years' Experience as an Irish Editor* (London: Macmillan, 1896), 2 vols, II, pp. 27 ff.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 380.      <sup>52</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland in the New Century*, p. 121.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165–6.

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Ireland' in southern Africa. Between October 1899 and May 1902, the Empire struggled to contain a Boer insurrection in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Guerrilla tactics were met by the British with concentration camps and agrarian devastation leading to civilian deaths. Although, as D. P. Moran insisted, the analogy with Ireland was strained, it was nonetheless popular.<sup>54</sup> Volunteer recruits to the Boer cause and parliamentary agitation by members of the Irish Party at Westminster were an index of opposition to British jingoism. Notwithstanding this, some 47,000 Irishmen fought on the British side, while charity donations and public displays of support point toward widespread loyalty.<sup>55</sup> Even so, the character of Irish opposition to an assault on 'Boer freedom' reflects the development of resistance to the Empire and the Union – and thus the sense that Ireland, though a contributor to the Empire, was nonetheless subject to it. Yeats, Gregory, Redmond, Connolly, Griffith, Gonne, John MacBride, and Seán O'Casey were all active in protesting against British policy in the Transvaal. In 1904 Michael Davitt condemned the 'attack made upon the Transvaal by the forces of the British Empire, in furtherance of the purposes and plans of freebooters and financiers'.<sup>56</sup>

Davitt's rhetoric was derived from the burgeoning suspicion of sordid acquisitiveness hitched to the overseas exploitation of resources occasioned by the 'scramble' for Africa. Reacting against the war in South Africa, John Morley and J. A. Hobson had turned their fire against Joseph Chamberlain's brand of free trade expansionism. Hobson, who had reported on the Boer War for the *Manchester Guardian* in 1899, indicted the machinations of Jewish finance as a malevolent force.<sup>57</sup> But despite his adoption of Hobsonian idioms, Davitt's real concern was to wrest the control of the soil of Ireland from venal landlords while repudiating what he saw as the humiliation of Boer farmers at the hands of the British. He claimed that broad-based outrage at the abuse and denigration of South African insurgents had united Irish opinion behind Redmond.<sup>58</sup> Yet he also believed that British conduct was a product of sinister interests and

<sup>54</sup> Donal P. McCracken, *Forgotten Protest: Ireland and the Anglo-Boer War* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003), pp. xv–xvi.

<sup>55</sup> Keith Jeffery, 'The Irish Soldier in the Boer War' in John Gooch ed., *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 142.

<sup>56</sup> Davitt, *Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*, p. 693.

<sup>57</sup> R. Koebner and H. D. Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 226.

<sup>58</sup> Davitt, *Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*, p. 694.

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he was happy to align these with imperialism. The aggrandising ambition which drove imperial power had imposed a costly regime of taxation on the mother country, undermined the stability of parliamentary government, and contributed to progressive depopulation in Ireland. The Empire, he thought, would inevitably ‘breed the diseases of its own decay and downfall’.<sup>59</sup> Despotism would lead to disaffection and kindle hopes of self-determination.

Davitt liked to cite J. A. Froude’s assertion that the British could govern India but not Ireland. This confirmed, he thought, the right of nationality that the Irish enjoyed along with other small European states like ‘Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Servia, and Greece’.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, at the time Davitt wrote, Irish independence looked wholly improbable, relying on unlikely fantasies of the United States emancipating Ireland as she had liberated Cuba from Spain.<sup>61</sup> After an extended period of Conservative administration, it fell to the Liberal Party to manage Irish affairs from 1905, first under the leadership of Henry Campbell-Bannerman and then under Herbert Henry Asquith. While home rule remained a party aspiration, it had receded as a policy commitment. Instead, the Chancellor, David Lloyd George, supported by twenty-nine Labour Party MPs, concentrated on advancing a programme of social reform, culminating in the attempt to pass the People’s Budget through parliament in 1909. The legislation proposed to tackle poverty through a welfare programme funded by tariffs and taxation, but it met with staunch opposition among Conservative MPs who looked to the House of Lords to strike the measure down. On 30 November, the Bill was vetoed, forcing a general election in January 1910 in which the Liberals threatened to neuter the upper chamber if the electorate returned them to power. The polls returned a hung parliament, with Asquith now dependent on Labour and the Irish Party. After a year of tensions, a second election followed in December 1910 with the result once more leaving the Liberals relying on John Redmond’s support. The Parliament Act passed in August 1911, depriving the Lords of the right to block money bills and replacing its entitlement to stop other legislative provisions with the power to delay their passage for two years. Redmond had demanded a home rule bill as the price of his support for the new

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 722–3.      <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 717.

<sup>61</sup> A view expressed by the journalist Alfred Stead in 1901, cited in J. O. Baylen, “‘What Mr Redmond Thought’: An Unpublished Interview with John Redmond, December 1906”, *Irish Historical Studies*, 19: 74 (September 1974), pp. 169–89, p. 172.

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government, and he could now look forward to assisting its advance without obstruction from the upper house. The Bill was duly introduced on 11 April 1912.

The third Home Rule Bill provided for a bicameral legislature in Dublin comprising a 40-member Senate and a 164-member Commons along with a reduction of the number of Irish MPs at Westminster from 103 to 42. Although the policy attracted broad Irish support, it was both federalist and devolutionary, and therefore hardly ‘nationalist’ in the technical sense: sovereignty would reside in the seat of empire. The execution of government business through the Dublin Castle administration would cease, although a Lord Lieutenant would be retained. Unionist opposition to the Bill was immediate and intense. Two days before its introduction, the leader of the Opposition, Andrew Bonar Law, together with Edward Carson, now leader of the Irish Unionist Alliance, reviewed 100,000 Ulster Volunteers in marching columns. The militia, led by Carson and James Craig, drew some of its strength from the lodges of the Orange Order and was tacitly supported by elements at the War Office in London. The Ulster Unionist Council, established in 1905, now became a central organ in the resistance to home rule as the centre of gravity within loyalism began to shift from the South. On 28 September 1912 the Ulster Covenant was signed at Belfast City Hall by a quarter of a million men while the accompanying Declaration was signed by a comparable number of women.<sup>62</sup> The feeling of peril and solidarity crystallised: ‘We perish if we yield.’<sup>63</sup> There was a stay of execution in January 1913 when the Lords voted down the legislation, deferring the implementation of the Act by 24 months. At this point the Ulster Volunteers were reformed into the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force in an effort to block the creation of an all-Ireland parliament by the threat of arms. The following November the formation of the Irish Volunteers, a rival militia supported by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, was presented by Eoin MacNeill as a means of asserting that ‘all Irish people, Unionist as well as Nationalist, are determined to have their own way’.<sup>64</sup> Cumann na mBan (The Women’s Council), a paramilitary organisation formed by leading republican women and intended to reinforce the Volunteers, was formed in April 1914. A path to confrontation had been cleared.

<sup>62</sup> For the Covenant and the Declaration see below pp. 140–1

<sup>63</sup> Rudyard Kipling, ‘Ulster 1912’, *The Morning Post*, 9 April 1912.

<sup>64</sup> Eoin MacNeill, ‘The North Began’, 1 November 1913, below p. 183.



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With a threat of resignation by senior Army officers stationed at the Curragh military camp in Co. Kildare announced in March 1914, the ability of the British government to control events appeared to diminish. An amending Bill providing for the temporary exclusion of Ulster from the jurisdiction of a home rule parliament was debated through the summer, although the number of counties subject to the exclusion had yet to be finalised. With the onset of the First World War at the end of July 1914, the amending Bill was abandoned due to a lack of consensus and home rule was suspended for the duration of the war. Consequently, the legislation was not revived until after 1918, although in the interim Lloyd George made covert concessions to unionism, alienating the Irish Party in the process. When an Irish Convention under Horace Plunkett was convened in 1917 to broker a deal, it ended in failure: agreement on Ulster remained intractable while devolution on Asquith's model was effectively dead. On the evidence at least of opinion in the Convention, a majority in the South favoured a dominion arrangement instead of a federal connection to the Westminster parliament – thereby seeking, in Plunkett's words, a 'government within the British Commonwealth of self-governing nations'.<sup>65</sup>

The impact of four years of a bloody conflagration in Europe on political attitudes in Ireland is not to be underestimated. Most immediately, it dissipated, or at least delayed, direct confrontation over the fate of Ulster as home rule loomed. Instead, senseless carnage on a far larger scale was pursued by the European powers. Although over 200,000 Irishmen fought on the Entente side and 40,000 lost their lives during the course of the war, the conflict had some potential to unify domestic dissensions. There was support for the British among the majority in the North, while a large preponderance in the South likewise pledged to join the effort. Members of the Ulster Volunteer Force streamed into the 36th (Ulster) Division to take up arms to defend the Empire, and the bulk of the Irish Volunteers formed the National Volunteers, who had a considerable presence in both the 10th and 16th (Irish) Divisions. In the House of Commons, after the opening of hostilities, Redmond declared that for the first time in over a century 'Ireland in this War feels her interests are precisely the same as yours.'<sup>66</sup> He expected that the shared experience of combat between nationalists and unionists would assuage bitterness

<sup>65</sup> Horace Plunkett, *A Defence of the Convention*, below p. 263.

<sup>66</sup> John Redmond, Speech on the Suspensory Bill, below p. 207.

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leading to mutual accommodation of a kind that might form the basis of a post-war settlement. Soldiers of the 10th (Irish) Division fell in droves at Gallipoli in 1915 while the 16th and 36th Divisions were decimated at the Somme in 1916. Thomas Kettle died in action during the Somme offensive while Redmond's brother lost his life in the Battle of Messines the following year. Throughout the duration of the war – including the aftermath of the 1916 Rising and the conscription controversy – extensive evidence of quiet sympathy for the Allied effort points to significant areas of shared allegiance spread across religious denominations and rival political constituencies in Ireland.<sup>67</sup> However, when Armistice arrived on 11 November 1918, common sacrifice did not deliver unity of purpose.

Where there was opposition to the war, it was sometimes fierce. An experience that in many respects generated alliances could also be savagely divisive. Already at the start of the war, Connolly complained that the hard-won achievements of generations of toil were being 'blown into annihilation from a hundred cannon mouths' in the name of a sham 'civilisation'.<sup>68</sup> Accordingly, there was an absolute commitment inside Connolly's trade union militia, the Irish Citizen Army, to the wisdom and legitimacy of an armed insurrection against the Empire, which was launched on 24 April 1916. By comparison, councils within the Irish Volunteers, and even inside the Irish Republican Brotherhood, were divided. Confusion in the run-up to Easter week hamstrung the Rising from the start, largely confining its operations to the capital, where 1,000 rebels occupied key positions and held out against 20,000 British soldiers for six days, leaving 500 dead and the city centre in ruins.<sup>69</sup> It has been widely attested that the punitive military response in the aftermath of the Rising conferred retrospective credibility on the insurgency: the staggered execution of 16 rebel leaders along with the arrest and internment of thousands of suspects inspired sympathy for what was now seen as a dignified if desperate cause. Farce, it seemed, had been elevated inadvertently into tragedy.

For the main protagonists, the Rising had been principled rather than comical in the first place. The 'needless death' that Yeats invoked in

<sup>67</sup> Niamh Gallagher, *Ireland and the Great War: A Social and Political History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> James Connolly, 'A Continental Revolution', below p. 200 and James Connolly, 'A War for Civilization', below p. 214.

<sup>69</sup> Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising: Ireland, Easter 1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), ch. 4.

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connection with the event had for Connolly precisely captured the slaughter in the trenches.<sup>70</sup> ‘Sacrifice’ did not ‘make a stone of the heart’.<sup>71</sup> It kindled passion. It meant devotion to a national ideal in place of futile butchery on the battlefields of foreign lands. As preparations for the Rising were in train, Connolly wrote that a ‘destiny not of our fashioning has chosen this generation as the one called upon for the supreme act of self-sacrifice – to die if need be that our race might live in freedom’.<sup>72</sup> If the object of freedom proved immediately elusive, the ordeal would nonetheless set an example. It was, in the words of the Proclamation, a ‘summons’. That task was carried out in the name of the ‘common good’.<sup>73</sup> For Pearse, the spirit of nationality had become a ‘forgotten truth’, and the Rising was an invitation to revive – ‘here in our day’ – its persistent if sometimes hidden appeal, its ‘august’ dignity.<sup>74</sup> Should the action in the short term miscarry, it would still inspire and so be imitated, which of course it was. In its own terms, such a stand is hardly conceived as a purely symbolic gesture. As attempts to impose a military draft on Ireland in April 1918 met with opposition from trade unions, the Catholic Church, and mainstream opinion, attitudes hardened further against the administration in London. Redmondism, and the Irish Party, haemorrhaged support. In the general election of 14 December 1918, Sinn Féin swept to victory across the South. Exemplary sacrifice had indeed achieved some kind of awakening.

As the war brought devastation, so its aftermath triggered waves of upheaval across Europe and the world. Louie Bennett, reflecting on the general tumult in 1918, commented optimistically that ‘Today a revolutionary ferment is stirring in the bewildered minds of the European nations, kindling a blaze of idealism in the hearts of the peoples before which the vices of Imperialism must presently shrink abashed.’<sup>75</sup> As she wrote, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire proceeded apace. In the same year, the Romanovs were executed, King Ferdinand of Bulgaria abdicated, Ludwig of Bavaria fled the country, Wilhelm II abandoned the German throne, and Charles I of Austria ceded his powers. Assorted

<sup>70</sup> Yeats, ‘Easter 1916’, *Collected Poems*, pp. 202–5. <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Connolly, ‘What Is a Free Nation?’, below p. 232.

<sup>73</sup> *Proclamation of the Republic*, below p. 235.

<sup>74</sup> Patrick Pearse, *The Sovereign People*, below p. 254.

<sup>75</sup> Louie Bennett, *Ireland and a People’s Peace*, below p. 272.

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imperial maps were redrawn.<sup>76</sup> Woodrow Wilson revealed his commitment to the civil right of self-government, usually mistaken for an engagement to entrench the right of self-determination.<sup>77</sup> Months later, at Brest-Litovsk, the Bolshevik government sought to implement Lenin's advocacy of 'the right to free political secession' from oppressor nations.<sup>78</sup>

Finland declared its independence from Russia in January 1918, and a bloody civil war ensued. In the same month, the Ukrainian People's Republic was established, and Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia soon withdrew from the Soviet federation. There was a Muslim revolt in Baku, and the Belarusian Republic was founded. On 22 April Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia declared their independence. So too, on 28 October, did Czechoslovakia. Austria and Hungary established autonomous states, and Poland won its freedom. In Germany bands of soldiers and workers formed revolutionary councils and, on 9 November, a republic was declared. At the same time, Bavaria proclaimed its own socialist statelet, followed by the establishment of free states in Baden, Hesse, Coburg, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin. In the midst of the international turmoil, tens of thousands of war veterans returned to settle in Ireland, which by this point had its own self-declared parliament, Dáil Éireann, established in January 1919 without Westminster's consent. The Irish Parliament prepared to meet at the Mansion House in Dublin in its capacity as a sovereign authority in a nominally independent state. While Dáil representatives were assembling on 21 January 1919, the first shots of the War of Independence rang out in Co. Tipperary.

Violence escalated from the middle of 1919, involving guerrilla tactics supported by a campaign of assassination. Government property was vandalised, arms raids carried out, and prisoners freed from capture. At the same time, patrols were ambushed and barracks attacked,

<sup>76</sup> Maurice Walsh, *Bitter Freedom: Ireland in a Revolutionary World 1918–1923* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), pp. 37–8.

<sup>77</sup> Trygve Throntveit, 'The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination', *Diplomatic History*, 35: 3 (June 2011), pp. 445–81. For the reconceptualisation of self-determination in the post-colonial context see Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019). For awareness in Ireland of Wilson's pronouncements see Alice Stopford Green, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: What it Means in Ireland*, below p. 280.

<sup>78</sup> V. I. Lenin, 'The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of Nations to Self-Determination' (1916), *Collected Works*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers 1964), 45 vols., XXII, p. 146. On the impact of Brest-Litovsk see Richard Bourke, 'Nationalism, Balkanization and Democracy' in *Schleifspuren: Lesarten des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Anke Fischer-Kattner et al. (Munich: Dreesbach Verlag, 2011), pp. 77–89.

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forcing the police force, the Royal Irish Constabulary, to withdraw from its rural bases. Westminster began to pay more attention to Irish affairs in 1920 and reinforcements – the so-called Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, drawn from the ranks of the British Army – were sent to assist the Royal Irish Constabulary. During this year, republican flying columns were used to assail British forces. Tax collection began to collapse while Sinn Féin-controlled councils appropriated rates and Westminster came to rely on emergency powers. Soon martial law was declared as the Dáil gradually built up a shadow government with its own judicial system across the south and west. During the conflict, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was responsible for nearly half of all fatalities, the Crown forces for 42 per cent, and reprisals against civilians were common. One of the main resources on the Irish side was the effectiveness of its intelligence gathering under Michael Collins. A peak of violence was reached on 21 November 1920 when attacks by Collins's assassins were avenged by British forces shooting indiscriminately into the crowd at a football match in Dublin's Croke Park. Seven days later a west Cork IRA unit under Tom Barry ambushed a large patrol of Auxiliaries at Kilmichael. A spiral of violence endured until a truce was secured on 11 July 1921.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the truce, killing in the North saw little respite until after the summer of 1922. Under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, the island had been partitioned, with the Belfast administration established on 3 May 1921. This meant that when preliminary talks were opened that summer between the President of Sinn Féin, Éamonn deValera, and Lloyd George, the existence of Northern Ireland was a reality – albeit a contested one – and any negotiation regarding a future settlement would necessarily be conducted against that background. Five plenipotentiaries from the Irish side arrived for discussions in London with leading members of the British Cabinet in October and three months later a Treaty accord had been struck. But its adoption into Irish legislation would prove bitterly controversial. The Treaty provided for the establishment of Southern Ireland as a self-governing dominion within the British Commonwealth, including recognition of the King as the head of the Empire. Members of the Irish Parliament were required, in pledging their allegiance to the Dáil, to take a secondary oath to the British monarch. However, Crown forces were to withdraw from the jurisdiction of

<sup>79</sup> Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2000).

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the new regime, although Britain would retain control of specified ports for naval purposes. Northern Ireland was awarded the option to opt out of the Treaty arrangements, while a Boundary Commission was set up to review the borders of the six counties in the expectation that the North might in due course come under the South.

The Treaty was debated in public sessions of the second Dáil between the middle of December 1921 and early January 1922, although disagreements deepened rather than being reconciled as the deliberations proceeded.<sup>80</sup> Ultimately these divisions led to civil war, shaping the character of the Free State, and subsequently the Republic. They also ensured that relations with Northern unionists would remain estranged and dogged by mutual recrimination. The opposing positions generated by the terms of the Treaty are commonly seen as distinguished in terms of attitudes rather than ideologies, whereas in fact the dissensions were manifestly driven by ideas.<sup>81</sup> The relationship between Ireland, the Crown, and the Empire was the central issue in contention. Dáil delegates shared a common objective: the establishment of an independent state. The question was how to achieve this, at what cost, and in what form. It was widely recognised on the pro-Treaty side, and by many of their opponents, that accepting the invitation to talks had inevitably meant compromise.<sup>82</sup> For Collins, Griffith, and their supporters, conceding ground meant accepting dominion status in the short term. In Collins's words, it awarded freedom – 'not the ultimate freedom that all nations desire and develop to, but the freedom to achieve it'.<sup>83</sup> There was much discussion about the meaning of honouring an 'ideal', and the difference between the 'substance' and the 'shadow' of liberty.<sup>84</sup> De Valera, with Childers's support, favoured a form of 'external' association between the Free State and the Empire, a specification that for Griffith amounted to a mere 'quibble of words'.<sup>85</sup> Markiewicz, against both these preferences, defended the right of republican sovereignty. Notwithstanding the existence of a shared political goal, there was thus endless scope for dissension.

<sup>80</sup> Jason Knirck, *Imagining Ireland's Independence: The Debates over the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

<sup>81</sup> *Pádraig Kirby*, 'Revolution, 1916–1923' in Thomas Bartlett ed., *The Cambridge History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), IV, p. 288.

<sup>82</sup> *Dáil Debates*, Vol. T, No. 6 (19 December 1921), Michael Collins's contribution.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, contribution by Seán Mac Eoin.

<sup>85</sup> Arthur Griffith, 'Speech on the Treaty', below p. 343. For Childers's defence of de Valera's position see Erskine Childers, *Clause by Clause: A Comparison between 'The Treaty' and Document No. 2* (Dublin: Irish Nation Committee, 1922).

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Contrary to expectations, secession had not unified viewpoints but rather proliferated disagreements. The very meaning of a republic was disputed on all sides. Instead of producing a common mind, the Revolution had generated multiple standpoints which only politics and arms could hope to reassemble, first into contending factions, and later into opposing parties within a constitutional regime.

### Ideas in Contention

In his 1911 book, *The Framework of Home Rule*, Erskine Childers presented Ireland as ‘the first and nearest of the British Colonies’.<sup>86</sup> What interested Childers was less the process of colonisation – conquest secured through plantation – than the resulting system of government under what used to be termed the ‘old colonial system’ whereby Ireland was tethered to Westminster on subordinate terms dictated by Poyning’s Law and the Declaratory Act.<sup>87</sup> At that point Ireland was, in the words of George Cornewall Lewis, ‘a dependent and subordinate kingdom’.<sup>88</sup> Childers recognised that this arrangement was succeeded in 1782 by legislative independence under Grattan’s Parliament and the Renunciation Act of the following year. His point was that Grattan’s Constitution was followed by the 1801 Act of Union – under which, ironically, Ireland approximated a dependency or Crown colony once more. In theory, under the Union, Ireland was an integral part of a unitary state, and thereby a participant in the management of its Empire. Yet in reality, Childers claimed, it was subject to unaccountable executive control. He thus wrote: ‘Ireland is at the moment under a form of government unique, so far as I know, in the whole world, but resembling more closely than anything else that of a British Crown Colony’.<sup>89</sup> Childers’s solution was to legislate for dominion home rule, precisely the arrangement he would reject in

<sup>86</sup> Erskine Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule* (London: Edward Arnold, 1911), p. 144.

<sup>87</sup> George L. Beer, *The Old Colonial System, 1660–1754* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 2 vols. Although Ireland under the system was styled a kingdom and not a colony, its legislature and administration were subject to the British government, giving rise to the famous question in William Molyneux, *The Case of Ireland Being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England, Stated* (Dublin: Joseph Ray, 1698), p. 145: ‘Do not the Kings of England bear the Stile of Ireland amongst the rest of their Kingdoms? Is this agreeable to the Nature of a Colony?’

<sup>88</sup> George Cornewall Lewis, *An Essay on the Government of Dependencies* (1841), with an Introduction by C. P. Lucas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1891), p. 152.

<sup>89</sup> Childers, *Framework of Home Rule*, p. 188.

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1922.<sup>90</sup> In 1911 he asked what Ireland would have to gain by ‘separation’ and answered: ‘Clearly nothing.’<sup>91</sup> At that stage, he believed, Fenianism was ‘extinct’, and quoted Redmond on the benefits of membership of the Empire.<sup>92</sup> On that basis, he sought for Ireland what Canada and other colonial dominions had secured – responsible government without a federal link to the Westminster parliament.

Self-government on this model, Childers noted, was distinct from the federated structures that characterised Switzerland, Germany, and the United States. However, in the British Empire – with New Zealand or South Africa, for example – dominions did not send representatives to the imperial parliament.<sup>93</sup> Still, there were debates about whether this degree of informality was sustainable.<sup>94</sup> By the start of the twentieth century there already existed a long-standing tradition of federalist argument in the United Kingdom, with proponents extending from Isaac Butt to Joseph Chamberlain, and including plans to federate the Empire pursued by the Round Table Movement.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, at this point Childers advocated what he termed ‘Colonial Home Rule’ as the best means of correcting the negative consequences that followed from being a virtual crown colony, presenting his preferred system as ‘an indispensable preliminary to the closer union of the various parts of the Empire’.<sup>96</sup> Under this version of home rule, Ireland would possess its own representative assembly with a responsible government whose link to Britain would be via the Crown and not the Westminster parliament. He cited W. E. H. Lecky as the author of the idea that Irish nationalism was a species of ‘democratic revolt’, although he discounted Lecky’s fears about what this insurrection entailed.<sup>97</sup> It was simply intolerable, Childers believed, that ‘one island democracy’ should determine the destiny of ‘another island democracy’.<sup>98</sup> Yet this was precisely what the

<sup>90</sup> He also, interestingly, defended federal home rule in Erskine Childers, ‘The Home Rule Bill and the Unionist Alternative – A Contrast’, *Contemporary Review*, June 1912.

<sup>91</sup> Childers, *Framework of Home Rule*, p. 147. <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>94</sup> Lucas, Introduction in Lewis, *Essay on the Government of Dependencies*, pp. lxiv–lxviii.

<sup>95</sup> John Kettle, ‘The Round Table Movement and “Home Rule All Round”’, *The Historical Journal*, 11: 2 (1968), pp. 332–53; Colin Reid, ‘“An Experiment in Constructive Unionism”: Isaac Butt, Home Rule and Federalist Political Thought during the 1870s’, *The English Historical Review*, 129: 537 (April 2014), pp. 332–61; Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), ch. 14.

<sup>96</sup> Childers, *Framework of Home Rule*, p. 148.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi. <sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.



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Union had meant for the smaller island. The United Kingdom executive as applied in Ireland, Childers complained, lacked all ‘popular control’.<sup>99</sup> Although the Irish members at Westminster could obstruct business, they could not hold specific departments of government to account. The result was that the actual administration of Ireland was determined by British party-political interest. Although the country was adequately represented – and thus not strictly a Crown colony – its representation did not control how it was governed.

Childers’s early advocacy of dominion home rule was singled out for discussion by both Dicey and Amery. It was the use of the dominion analogy that provoked Amery’s criticism. Since Lord Durham’s 1838 Report on the affairs of Canada, the extension of self-government to the colonies of white settlement was widely hailed as turning ‘disaffection into loyalty’.<sup>100</sup> In proposing this arrangement for Ireland, Amery observed, advocates of Irish home rule conflated distinct aspects of the imperial set-up and sought to apply them to the incomparable case of a near-neighbour with a large constituency susceptible to secessionist hankering. Devolution to Ireland, he contended, would not result in a process of integration but in an increased incidence of friction between both countries, as happened with Newfoundland outside the Confederation of North American Colonies – except that Ireland was more commercially dependent on Britain than Newfoundland was on Canada.<sup>101</sup> The best indication of the likely future for relations between Britain and Ireland under home rule – dominion or otherwise – was the agitation that succeeded the grant of self-government to the Transvaal after the Battle of Majuba in 1881.<sup>102</sup> Irish alienation was a symptom of past policies that were no longer being pursued: ‘Ireland suffers to-day economically and politically, from the legacy of political separation in the eighteenth century, and of economic disunion in the nineteenth.’<sup>103</sup> Now, however, the moral and material interests of both countries demanded an incorporating union.<sup>104</sup> Consolidation could further be secured by an appropriate regime of tariffs. In addition, Amery thought, while the two islands would thus be drawn together under the United Kingdom parliament, a separate imperial council could have oversight of the dominions.<sup>105</sup> In this way, the Union would be fused, and the Empire federated.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>100</sup> L. S. Amery, ‘Home Rule and the Colonial Analogy’, below p. 101.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

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Dicey similarly regarded Childers's arguments as compelling but unpersuasive.<sup>106</sup> Dicey had been a stalwart campaigner against home rule since 1886. For him, the 1912 Bill reproduced all the failings of earlier renditions and added new deficiencies into the mix. Peculiarly destructive, he felt, was the federal component of the Bill, a feature it shared with the 1893 home rule scheme whose wisdom he had equally disputed.<sup>107</sup> For that reason, while the maintenance of a full incorporating or parliamentary union was the only credible arrangement for Ireland, dominion home rule, on Childers's model, along with full separation, were preferable to any proposal to retain Irish members at Westminster.<sup>108</sup> Each of the available models, however, suffered from a common misapprehension: they all presupposed the legitimacy of the principle of nationality – a vague notion, Dicey thought, whose appeal was rooted in the malleable concept of popular sovereignty. 'The theory of nationality', wrote Lord Acton in 1862, 'is involved in the democratic theory of the sovereignty of the general will.'<sup>109</sup> Dicey noted that the idea gained international prominence between 1848 and 1870, seducing Gladstone as it had done so many others who neglected to consider its application in practice. Lecky, an early advocate, came to rue his original commitment. Gladstone, on the other hand, never relented. Even the justification for Southern secession from the American Union, he believed, could be traced to the fact that 'they have made a nation'.<sup>110</sup> This simply pointed to a fact of modern politics: new nationalities would always lurk within an established nationality. The task for statecraft, Dicey suggested, was to compose a viable whole. Neither federal nor dominion home rule for Ireland could secure that objective. In the Irish case, both instruments were long-term recipes for separation, which in itself would not remove every cause of conflict. In the shorter term, he predicted, they guaranteed pernicious competition.

<sup>106</sup> Dicey, *Fool's Paradise*, p. 20.

<sup>107</sup> Successively in A. V. Dicey, *England's Case Against Home Rule* (London: John Murray, 1886); A. V. Dicey, *A Leap in the Dark: A Criticism of the Principles of Home Rule as Illustrated by the Bill of 1893* (London: John Murray, 1893). Dicey's arguments against federalism in 1913 were directed specifically against 'Pacificus' [F. S. Oliver], *Federalism and Home Rule* (London: John Murray, 1910).

<sup>108</sup> A. V. Dicey, *Fool's Paradise*, below p. 161.

<sup>109</sup> Lord Acton, 'Nationality' (1862) in *Selected Writings of Lord Acton: Essays in the History of Liberty*, ed. J. Rufus Fears (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1986), p. 423.

<sup>110</sup> John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1903, 3rd ed. 1911), 3 vols., II, p. 61, cited by Dicey, *Fool's Paradise*, p. xix.

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The vindication of the Union was, for Dicey, in part to be found in the prosperity and loyalty of Ulster. It was also to be found more generally in the success of Wyndham's land purchase scheme. As a result of it, small proprietors in Ireland no longer subscribed to constitutional innovation as a means of winning economic improvement.<sup>111</sup> Carson's arguments similarly relied on the tangible benefits of the Union: 'however Ireland might have suffered in the past, the day of her regeneration had already dawned'.<sup>112</sup> Although he counted himself at bottom a Liberal, he saluted the constructive measures pursued by successive Conservative governments. The opponents of unionism naturally countered these claims. For Markiewicz the Irish experience since 1801 had been one of over-taxation, underpopulation, and the decline of the Irish language.<sup>113</sup> Childers was happy to concede that advances in peasant ownership along with the impact of the 1898 Local Government Act had together 'destroyed the exceptional political privileges of the landlord class'. Yet still the overarching system of government deprived the country of 'national life' since the government at Westminster was never answerable to Irish interests.<sup>114</sup> Griffith likewise attributed Ireland's difficulties to constitutional causes, concentrating more specifically on their economic consequences.

Griffith's analysis appeared in a series of articles published in the pages of *Sinn Féin* in 1911. As indicated earlier, underlying his argument was a commitment to the Austro-Hungarian system of dual monarchy negotiated in 1867 by the imperial chancellor, Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust, and signed by Hungary's Ferenc Deák and Austria's Franz Joseph. Griffith had elaborated his 'parallel' for Ireland in *The Resurrection of Hungary* in 1904, and he now turned to reconstruct the manner in which the 1801 Union had been a betrayal of the principle of two realms under a single crown. In narrating this tale of treachery, Griffith claimed to have Irish unionists in sight as his target audience.<sup>115</sup> The aim was to show that a policy of British 'imperialism' subverted the interests of northern Protestants as much as it did those of southern Catholics by impoverishing the country under the zero-sum programme of securing English national greatness: 'English Imperialism decreed that Ireland must be struck down and kept down.'<sup>116</sup> This project, Griffith argued, had been

<sup>111</sup> Dicey, *Fool's Paradise*, below p. 164.

<sup>112</sup> Edward Carson, 'Settlement of an Old Controversy', below p. 128.

<sup>113</sup> Markiewicz, *Women, Ideals and the Nation*, below p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule*, below p. 81.

<sup>115</sup> Arthur Griffith, 'Pitt's Policy', below p. 60. <sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

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inaugurated by Pitt the Younger on the basis of ideas developed by Adam Smith. With Ireland tethered under the Union, free trade would be pursued to aggrandise England on the basis of the ‘commercial conquest of the globe’.<sup>117</sup> Griffith’s verdict on the outcome was vividly expressed in the words of an imagined British statesman: “Behold. We graze the bullocks where the homesteads of four millions stood. We have made of Ireland the one country in Europe where the people yearly diminish. We have strengthened England. We have carried out Pitt’s policy.”<sup>118</sup>

Griffith’s thesis involved the rejection of a particular conception of imperialism – of which there were many incompatible theories in the period.<sup>119</sup> But it was not a rejection of empire as such. In fact, his purpose was to relaunch the goal of world hegemony on a more equitable basis: he wished to create, as he put it, ‘an invincible naval and military Anglo-Hibernian Empire’.<sup>120</sup> Smith’s critique of the mercantile system of political economy, Griffith thought, had in reality used the tool of free trade as a means of exclusive expansionism. According to Griffith, Friedrich List’s scheme of ‘national’ economy had been the leading continental riposte, based on Henry Carey’s plans for protectionism.<sup>121</sup> Kettle, unlike Amery, rejected the pursuit of protection while adhering to the conception of national interest promoted by the German historical school of economics.<sup>122</sup> However, Griffith defended a regime of tariffs to be jointly imposed under his Anglo-Hibernian condominium. Yet Britain would have to be brought to endorse the wisdom of this measure. The rise of Germany was the only inducement that might push statecraft in the right direction. Bismarck’s victories over Austria and France and the subsequent increase in German naval power meant that sooner or later Britain would face its new rival in the theatre of war. In the absence of an equal partnership with Ireland, the Irish would ‘hail her defeat as their

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.      <sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>119</sup> Among the most influential texts of the period was J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (New York: James Pott, 1902), which contributed to the transformation of the meaning of the term. Relevant also in associating overseas expansion with capitalist exploitation is Rudolf Hilferding, *Das Finanzkapital: Eine Studie über die jüngste Entwicklung des Kapitalismus* (Vienna: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1910). See also V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917) in *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), 3 vols., I, pp. 667–766. However, for competing visions of imperialism as a constructive international policy, see Dicey, *Fool’s Paradise*, pp. xxxi ff.

<sup>120</sup> Griffith, ‘Pitt’s Policy’, below p. 38.      <sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>122</sup> See Thomas M. Kettle, ‘The Economics of Nationalism’, below. For his response to the policy of dual monarchy and abstentionism see Thomas M. Kettle, ‘Would the Hungarian Policy Work?’, *New Ireland Review* (February 1905), pp. 321–8.

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salvation'.<sup>123</sup> The military might of the Germans had created conditions resembling those faced by Britain in 1782. Pressed by foreign engagements again in the early twentieth century, Griffith concluded, Britain would be wise to renew the pact agreed with Ireland under Grattan.

For Griffith nationality could be reconciled with empire; but for Pearse they were intrinsically antipathetic. He believed that the nation was prior to politics – it was an expression of ‘natural’ human affection, animated by spiritual values. It was, in effect, an extension of family relations, imbued with divine purpose: ‘The nation is of God, the empire is of man.’<sup>124</sup> While empire was founded on commercial utility, the nation was rooted in sentiments of mutual affiliation. Nonetheless, Pearse judged that in the Irish case this sensibility had been corrupted and would in practice have to be rekindled, not least by raising civic awareness through discipline and arms. Whether home rule was granted or not, Pearse reflected in 1913, ‘the substantial task of achieving the Irish Nation’ would remain.<sup>125</sup> Yet happily, since nationality was primordial, it was always available to be resurrected even when the memory of it had been virtually obliterated. The prospect of resuscitation held out the promise that ‘the people itself will perhaps be its own Messiah, the people labouring, scourged, crowned with thorns, agonising and dying, to rise again immortal and impassible’.<sup>126</sup> Four years before Pearse’s bid to appropriate the Christian ordeal in the service of national liberation, Markiewicz had declared that ‘as the death of Christ brought a new hope and a new life to an old world, so the blood of each martyr shed in the cause of liberty will give a new impetus to the comrades who are left behind to continue the work’.<sup>127</sup> She too had recognised the decline of national feeling: modern transport, education, the postal service, the telegraph, and the press had shrunk distances and eroded customs. The shared project of national freedom would therefore have to be revived. Ireland, like Egypt and India, appeared to Markiewicz to be held in bondage and needed to be awoken by inspiring ideals. Empires, like the Macedonian, relied on force and could not survive; nationalities, like the Irish, relied on spiritual faith which could be replenished.<sup>128</sup>

This reinvigoration would not just be moral but also social in nature. The aim was ‘to build up a great nation, noble and self-sacrificing,

<sup>123</sup> Griffith, ‘Pitt’s Policy’, below p. 60.

<sup>124</sup> Pearse, *The Sovereign People*, below p. 240.      <sup>125</sup> Pearse, *The Coming Revolution*, below p. 187.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.      <sup>127</sup> Markiewicz, *Women, Ideals and the Nation*, below p. 4.      <sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

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industrious and free'.<sup>129</sup> For Pearse any programme of social reconstruction should be anchored in the 'democratic truths' underpinning the four 'gospels' of republican ideology developed by Wolfe Tone, Thomas Davis, Fintan Lalor, and John Mitchel.<sup>130</sup> But it was Connolly who developed this agenda into a programme of revolution. He envisaged transforming economic, social, and intellectual relations together. A 'reconquest' of Ireland implied, among other things, a species of ideological conversion. It was this aspect of Connolly's campaign that led him to present his *Labour in Irish History* 'as part of the literature of the Gaelic revival'.<sup>131</sup> He drew on Alice Stopford Green's historical study, *The Making of Ireland and Its Undoing*, to create a vision of primitive communism in pre-Norman Ireland. This followed a wider European trend of finding the antidote to exploitation in social systems that were unmolested by capitalist relations of production. The German *Mark*, the Russian *mir*, and the Indian village community epitomised primeval collectivism. Even Marx in his later writings came to value the ethos of archaic co-operation.<sup>132</sup> According to Connolly, the steady colonial reduction of Ireland had introduced a regime of private property and thus prepared the ground for modern commercial society. The last remnants of 'rude' social democracy expired in 1649. At the same time, ideological conquest followed material subjugation. With the education of the Irish clergy in 'the continental Schools of European despots' after Williamite Wars in Ireland, learning was steadily seduced by the corrupt principles of the *ancien régime*, completing the oblivion of Gaelic society. There followed the degradation of Irish manners in English literature and the self-abasement of Irish character in Anglo-Irish writing. Faced with the general decline in national self-respect, only the working classes offered the means of fundamental resistance. However, hitherto their attempts at insurrection had failed because the promise of political liberty since 1798 had not been systematically linked to the goal of economic freedom. Connolly reminded his readers that 'revolutions are not the product of our brains, but of ripe material conditions'.<sup>133</sup> But in fact he believed that

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. <sup>130</sup> Pearse, *The Sovereign People*, below pp. 241–50.

<sup>131</sup> James Connolly, *Labour in Irish History*, below p. 26.

<sup>132</sup> For Marx's shifting position on village communities and his absorption of arguments made fashionable by Maurer, Haxthausen, Stubbs, Freeman, and Maine see Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), pp. 568 ff.

<sup>133</sup> Connolly, *Labour in Irish History*, below p. 32.

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intellectual persuasion was also essential: labour had to be stirred by a vision of the future.

Carl Schmitt would argue in 1923 that successful mobilisation in the age of mass democracy required a principle (or ‘myth’) of cohesion. Since ideas of nationality or class might equally serve that purpose, it struck him as unsurprising that Connolly conspired with Pearse in prosecuting the Rising.<sup>134</sup> Yet collaboration does not entail concurrence. Having established the Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896, Connolly was increasingly attracted by syndicalist methods after his experience of trade unionism during his period in the United States between 1903 and 1910. In *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* he would argue that the cause of social democracy was best advanced by a system of coordinated labour unions. While social power was being nurtured on the industrial ‘battlefield’, political agitation and revolutionary militancy would simultaneously promote the cause of public ownership.<sup>135</sup> This concerted programme required an alliance between day labourers and ‘workers whose toil was upon the intellectual plane’.<sup>136</sup> The energies of literary and artistic life had been distracted, he thought, by the exclusive pursuit of national freedom. But now the aims of ‘wage labourers and their intellectual comrades’ would have to be harnessed to the cause of socialism.<sup>137</sup> Increasingly after the start of the First World War, Connolly meditated the possibilities of insurgency in the interest both of nationalism and socialism. The former, he thought, was a fitting instrument of the latter. He contemplated various methods for bringing about ‘the final dethronement of the vulture classes that rule and rob the world’.<sup>138</sup> In the end he opted to throw in his lot with a republican rising against the Empire based on a revival of the ‘tradition of nationhood’ and aiming at ‘the establishment of a permanent National Government’.<sup>139</sup> For him, a mixture of history and geography vindicated this national focus. In comparative terms, he thought, Belgium was but a creation of yesterday, while ‘the frontiers of Ireland, the ineffaceable marks of the separate existence of Ireland, are as old as Europe itself, the handiwork of the Almighty, not of politicians’.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (1923), trans. Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 75.

<sup>135</sup> James Connolly, *The Re-Conquest of Ireland*, below p. 219.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222. <sup>138</sup> James Connolly, ‘Our Duty in the Present Crisis’, below p. 196.

<sup>139</sup> *Proclamation of the Republic*, below p. 234.

<sup>140</sup> Connolly, ‘Our Duty in the Present Crisis’, below p. 231.

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This conclusion could not accommodate Ulster's appeal to nationality. 'They have their own version of *Sinn Féin* – they, too, want to be left to themselves alone', declared Horace Plunkett in response to the southern Irish tendency to disregard the claims of the north-east to national legitimacy.<sup>141</sup> Carson maintained that reasoned apprehension among Protestants about impeding Catholic dominance was not based on expectations of open persecution. Instead, there was fear about the regular operation of democratic institutions as these were likely to impact upon the rights of minorities.<sup>142</sup> For Childers and Lynd, worries about intolerance were simply misplaced.<sup>143</sup> But this assessment was based on the evidence for Catholic prejudice, which was felt to be negligible, rather than on an appreciation of how Catholic democracy functioned. Espousing Irish republicanism in 1918, Stopford Green pronounced that 'the rule of one democracy by another is unthinkable'.<sup>144</sup> Yet for Ronald McNeill defending partition on the eve of the Irish civil war, this was exactly what the republican position entailed.<sup>145</sup> The division of the island into distinct jurisdictions was not, McNeill insisted, an act of dismemberment but merely the recognition of a *fait accompli*. This amounted to the contention that an Ulster democracy existed inside the population of the island as a whole demanding institutional recognition. This claim was the culmination of unionist polemic. However, technically, the proposition was not a defence of the 1801 Union but rather an assertion of its end.

Asquith had famously declared in the House of Commons in 1912 that Ireland must be regarded as a 'nation': 'What nation? The Irish nation – repeated and ratified time after time during the best part of the life of a generation.'<sup>146</sup> The statement was a perpetuation of Gladstonian faith. Yet the implications of the position pointed in numerous potentially contradictory directions. It meant that Ireland as a corporate entity should be taken as the democratic basis on which any rightful system of government ought to be constructed. Yet this left unresolved the form of administration that would best honour that foundation in popular legitimacy. Opinion

<sup>141</sup> Plunkett, *A Defence of the Convention*, below p. 267.

<sup>142</sup> Carson, 'Settlement of an Old Controversy', below p. 136.

<sup>143</sup> Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule*, below p. 77; Robert Lynd, 'Ulster the Facts of the Case', below p. 234.

<sup>144</sup> Stopford Green, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, below p. 293.

<sup>145</sup> Ronald McNeill, *Ulster's Stand for Union*, below p. 364. For discussion see Colin Reid, 'Democracy, Sovereignty and Unionist Political Thought during the Revolutionary Period', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 27 (December 2017), pp. 211–32.

<sup>146</sup> Hansard, 11 April 1912, Vol. 36, cols. 1401–2.



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in Ireland divided on this question, not simply between unionists and nationalists, as the ensuing conflict is usually portrayed, but within these respective bodies of thought as well. This left Ireland disjointed, but not along a single axis. Unionism splintered between maintaining the status quo and creating a home rule parliament in Belfast. At the same time, Protestant unionism fractured between North and South. The fissures within nationalism were more conspicuous still, rendering the very category an empty generalisation. Consequently, opponents of a parliamentary union argued on competing fronts: for the creation of a new imperial condominium; for self-government in various guises under the Westminster parliament; and for assorted forms of separatism leading to political outcomes ranging from capitalist democracy to socialist republicanism. Militant conflict streamlined this factionalism – on both sides of the border. Yet it was the original rupture stemming from 1886 that proved a decisive turning point for the history of these islands, and a defining moment for the Empire as a whole.

## Bibliographical Essay

### *Accounts of the Period*

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## Chronology of Events

- 1886     *8 April*: First Home Rule Bill (i.e. Government of Ireland Bill) introduced in Commons by Liberal Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone.  
*8 June*: Home Rule defeated in Commons by 341 votes (including 93 Liberals) to 311.
- 1891     Irish Unionist Alliance formed, led by Colonel Edward Saunderson.
- 1893     *13 February*: Second Home Rule Bill introduced in Commons by Prime Minister Gladstone. Passed third reading on 1 Sept by 301 votes to 267.  
*31 July*: The Gaelic League, an organisation to revive Irish language and culture, founded by Douglas Hyde, Eoin MacNeill, and Fr Eugene Downey.  
*9 September*: Second Home Rule Bill rejected by Lords by 419 votes to 41.
- 1898     James Connolly launches *The Workers' Republic*.
- 1899     *4 March*: Arthur Griffith launches and becomes editor of *United Irishman*.
- 1900     Maud Gonne forms radical nationalist women's organisation, Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland). Constance Markievicz and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington become members.  
*January–February*: Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) reunites after ten-year rift between factions under leadership of John Redmond.

*Chronology of Events*

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- 1904 *2 January–July*: Griffith publishes *The Resurrection of Hungary* in weekly articles printed in *United Irishman*. Reprinted in book form at end of year.
- 1905 *3 March*: Ulster Unionist Council formed in Belfast.  
*28 November*: First Annual Convention of Griffith's The National Council, at which he presents 'The Sinn Féin Policy'.
- 1907 *21 April*: Formation of Sinn Féin League.
- 1908 *21 February*: Sinn Féin stands for parliament for first time in North Leitrim by-election and is defeated by IPP.  
*11 November*: Suffrage organisation Irish Women's Franchise League established by Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington and three others.
- 1909 *4 January*: James Larkin establishes trade union, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU).  
*30 November*: House of Lords rejects 'The People's Budget', precipitating constitutional crisis.
- 1910 *January*: UK general election. Hung parliament. Liberals retain power by forming government with IPP.  
*21 February*: Edward Carson elected leader of Irish Unionist Alliance.  
*December*: UK general election. Liberals retain power and form government with IPP. Last general election to be held until end of First World War.
- 1911 *18 August*: Parliament Act. Removes veto of House of Lords.  
*21 August*: Louie Bennett and Helen Chenevix establish Irish Women's Suffrage Federation.  
*23 September*: Ulster Unionist monster meeting at Craigavon, Belfast, to protest home rule. Organised by James Craig.
- 1912 *9 April*: Mass Unionist gathering at Balmoral Showground, Belfast. Conservative leader Andrew Bonar Law pledges unconditional support for Ulster Unionist resistance to home rule.  
*11 April*: Third Home Rule Bill presented to Commons by Liberal Prime Minister Herbert H. Asquith.  
*9 May*: Home Rule Bill passes second reading in Commons by 370 votes to 270.



*Chronology of Events*

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- 1913
- 11 June:* Liberal MP Thomas Agar-Robartes proposes amendment to exclude northern Protestant majority counties of Antrim, Armagh, Derry, and Down from Home Rule Bill, the first formal parliamentary proposal to exclude part of Ulster. Motion defeated.
- 28 June:* James Connolly founds Irish Labour Party.
- 28 September:* Unionists declare this day ‘Ulster Day’.
- 237,368 men sign Ulster Solemn League and Covenant;  
 234,046 women sign corresponding Women’s Declaration.
- 16 January:* Third reading of Home Rule Bill in Commons. Passed by 368 votes to 258.
- 30 January:* House of Lords reject Home Rule Bill by 326 votes to 69, delaying progress of legislation but not vetoing it. Home rule set to come into operation.
- 31 January:* Formation of Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).
- 26 August:* General strike in Dublin. Approximately 20,000 workers go on strike against 300 employers. The ‘Lockout’ lasts until early 1914.
- 23 September:* Ulster Unionist Council endorses Proclamation of a Provisional Government for Ulster.
- 1 November:* Eoin MacNeill publishes ‘The North Began’ in *An Claidheamh Soluis*.
- 11–25 November:* Irish Volunteers launched with Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) backing. MacNeill becomes leader.
- 19 November:* James Larkin, James Connolly, and Jack White form Irish Citizen Army.
- 1914
- 9 March:* Carson rejects Asquith’s proposal for Ulster counties to opt out of home rule for six years.
- 20 March:* Curragh incident. Senior British military officers refuse to deploy British Army against Ulster loyalists.
- 6 April:* New Cabinet proposal that six counties of Ulster would not be included in home rule legislation ‘unless by their own consent’, effectively making partition proposal permanent.
- 24–5 April:* UVF gunrunning in Larne, Donaghadee, and Bangor. Approximately 20,000 rifles and 3 million rounds of ammunition smuggled from Germany.

### *Chronology of Events*

25 *May*: Unamended Home Rule Bill passes third and final reading in House of Commons with no agreement over Ulster.

10–16 *June*: Redmond wrests control of Irish Volunteers from IRB.

28 *June*: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to Austro-Hungarian Empire, and his wife Sophia are assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

21–4 *July*: At the King's request, a conference of all parties is held at Buckingham Palace to resolve the 'Irish Question'. Conference fails.

26 *July*: Irish Volunteers' failed gunrunning at Howth, Dublin. British Army opens fire on a crowd in Bachelors Walk, killing four civilians and wounding thirty.

3 *August*:

- Germany declares war on France.
- Redmond commits Irish Volunteers to defence of Ireland.

4 *August*: Germany invades neutral Belgium. UK declares war on Germany.

8 *August*: UK Parliament passes Defence of the Realm Act.

18 *September*: Government of Ireland Act receives Royal Assent but suspended for one year or until end of European hostilities, pending resolution of Ulster question.

20 *September*: Redmond makes famous speech at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, committing Irish Volunteers to going 'wherever the firing line extends'.

24 *September*: Irish Volunteers split into two groups over Redmond's declaration: the majority National Volunteers, who follow Redmond, and the minority Irish Volunteers, who retain the name.

2–4 *December*: Government suppresses Griffith's *Sinn Féin*, the IRB's *Irish Freedom*, and Connolly's *The Irish Worker*. Griffith launches *Eire/Ireland*.

1915 *Early 1915*: *Eire/Ireland* suppressed by government. Griffith launches *Scissors and Paste*. Suppressed in March.

1 *May*: IRB establishes new Military Committee, which contains members who play key role in 1916 rebellion.

*Chronology of Events*

- 25 *May*: Asquith forms coalition government. Carson appointed Attorney General. Redmond refuses appointment in new administration.
- 29 *May*: Connolly publishes new series of *The Workers' Republic*.
- 19 *June*: Griffith publishes *Nationality*.
- 1 *August*: Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's funeral used as propaganda event by republicans. Pearse delivers famous graveside oration.
- 1916 19–22 *January*: IRB Military Council agreed to instigate rebellion no later than Easter. Connolly joins Council.
- 1 *March*: IRB decide on Easter Sunday for rebellion, unbeknownst to Eoin MacNeill.
- 22 *April*: MacNeill revokes orders for Easter manoeuvres.
- 23 *April*: MacNeill's orders published in the *Sunday Independent*. IRB Military Council decide to go ahead with rebellion regardless.
- 24 *April*: First day of Easter Rising. Key locations seized in Dublin by 1,250 members of the IRB, Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBhan, and Irish Citizen Army. Irish tricolour hoisted for first time outside captured General Post Office (GPO) and Pearse reads Proclamation. Smaller actions take place in Galway, Meath, and Wexford.
- 25 *April*: Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, husband of Hanna, shot dead by Captain J. C. Bowen-Colthurst. Martial law declared.
- 27 *April*: Connolly badly injured in GPO.
- 29–30 *April*: Unconditional surrender of rebels. 466 lives lost, including 254 civilians.
- 3–12 *May*: Fifteen rebel leaders executed including Pearse and Connolly. Roger Casement executed on 13 August.
- May–July*: David Lloyd George, Secretary of State for War, resumes negotiations with IPP and Ulster Unionists on basis of implementing home rule and excluding Ulster from settlement.
- 9 *September*: Thomas M. Kettle killed at Ginchy.
- 6 *December*: Lloyd George takes over prime ministership from Asquith and forms War Cabinet.

*Chronology of Events*

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- 1917
- 5 February:* Count Plunkett, father of executed rebel Joseph, wins Roscommon North by-election, the first of several by-election nationalist swings away from IPP.
  - 9 May:* Joseph McGuinness (Sinn Féin), imprisoned after the Rising, narrowly wins South Longford by-election.
  - 16 May:* Lloyd George proposes home rule for twenty-six counties (excluding Ulster) or convention of Irishmen to resolve impasse. Redmond declines home rule.
  - 10 July:* Eamon de Valera (Sinn Féin) wins East Clare by-election following death of Willie Redmond MP (brother of IPP leader) at Battle of Messines Ridge, Belgium.
  - 25 July:* First meeting of Irish Convention.
  - 10 August:* W. T. Cosgrave (Sinn Féin) wins by-election for Kilkenny City.
  - 20 Sept:* Thomas Ashe, the first of several republican hunger strikers, dies of force-feeding.
  - 25–7 October:* Eamon de Valera elected president of Sinn Féin at party's first ard-fheis (convention). Griffith does not contest election. De Valera also becomes president of Irish Volunteers.
- 1918
- 2 February:* Patrick Donnelly (IPP) wins South Armagh by-election, defeating Sinn Féin.
  - 6 February:* Representation of the People Act receives Royal Assent. Enfranchises women aged thirty and above and all men aged twenty-one and above (with qualifications).
  - 6 March:* John Redmond dies.
  - 12 March:* John Dillon elected IPP leader.
  - 21 March:* German spring offensive begins.
  - 5 April:* Final meeting of Irish Convention.
  - 9 April:* Military Service Bill (including Ireland) introduced in Westminster and Irish Convention proposal rejected by government.
  - 18 April:*
    - Military Service (No. 2) Act, 1918 receives Royal Assent, expanding age of compulsion to include all males aged eighteen to fifty-one (with qualifications).

*Chronology of Events*

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- Representative gathering of nationalists (including Irish Labour, the Catholic Church, and all nationalist parties) at Mansion House, Dublin, to coordinate opposition to conscription.
  - 21 April:* Anti-conscription pledges signed across Ireland until late 1918.
  - 17–18 May:* Arrest of Sinn Féin leadership in intelligence fiasco known as ‘German plot’.
  - 20 June:* Griffith (Sinn Féin) wins East Cavan by-election.
  - 1 November:* Irish Labour agrees to withdraw from contesting UK general election, positioning election as a referendum on the national question.
  - 11 November:* Armistice signed between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany. Hostilities on Western Front cease at 11 a.m.
  - 14–28 December:* UK general election. Sinn Féin wins seventy-three seats on abstentionist platform. IPP win six. Unionists win twenty-six. Constance Markievicz (Sinn Féin) is first female MP to be elected in UK.
  - 1919 *18 January:* Paris Peace Conference opens in Versailles, France.
  - 21 January:*
    - First meeting of Dáil Éireann in Dublin. Sinn Féin declares Ireland independent
    - Two Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) men killed in Soloheadbeg Ambush in Tipperary by IRA volunteers. Initiates Irish War of Independence.
  - 1 April:* Second meeting of Dáil Éireann. De Valera elected President.
  - 2 April:* Markievicz appointed Minister for Labour: first Irish female Cabinet Minister (the only one for sixty years) and first in Western Europe.
  - 18 April:* De Valera elected president of Sinn Féin.
  - 17 May:* First Republican court established at Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo.
  - 28 June:* Treaty of Versailles signed, formally ending First World War.

*Chronology of Events*

- 1920
- 12 September:* Dáil Éireann proscribed by British authorities.
- 4 November:* British Cabinet's Irish Committee led by southern Unionist Walter Long creates two home rule parliaments for Ireland (one in Dublin; one in Belfast) with a Council of Ireland to provide framework for unification.
- 25 February:* New Government of Ireland Bill introduced to Commons based on Long's proposal.
- 10 March:* UUC accepts Long's proposal and parliament for Northern Ireland.
- 25 March:* British servicemen ('Black and Tans' and Auxiliaries) arrive in Ireland to assist RIC.
- 31 March:* Carson opposes partition of Ireland in second reading of Government of Ireland Bill, calling it a betrayal of unionists in the south and west.
- 23 July:* 14 die and 100 injured in fierce rioting in Belfast.
- 13 August:* Restoration of Order in Ireland Act receives Royal Assent. IRA activists to be tried by court martial rather than by jury in criminal courts.
- 19 August:* Lord Mayor of Cork Terence MacSwiney embarks on hunger strike in Brixton Prison following conviction by court martial for sedition. Griffith delivers graveside oration in Cork on 31 October.
- 22 October:* Ulster Special Constabulary formed: an armed (and predominantly northern Protestant) police reserve.
- 21 November:* 'Bloody Sunday': IRA kill fourteen British undercover agents. Auxiliary Division of RIC retaliate, opening fire on spectators at football match in Croke Park, Dublin, killing thirteen.
- 28 November:* 'Kilmichael ambush': two lorries carrying Auxiliaries ambushed by IRA at Kilmichael, killing seventeen. Three IRA men killed.
- 10 December:* Martial law declared in counties Cork, Limerick, Kerry, and Tipperary.
- 11 December:* Cork city centre burned in reprisal attacks by Crown forces.
- 23 December:* Government of Ireland Act 1920 receives Royal Assent.

*Chronology of Events*

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- 1921
- 3: Northern Ireland formally created under Government of Ireland Act 1920.
- 13 May: Irish elections in the South held under terms of the Government of Ireland Act 1920. All 128 candidates returned unopposed, including 124 Sinn Féin members who join Second Dáil.
- 24 May: Northern Irish elections held under terms of Government of Ireland Act 1920. Unionists win forty out of fifty-two seats.
- 7 June: James Craig elected first prime minister of Northern Ireland.
- 22 June: New Parliament of Northern Ireland meets at Belfast City Hall and is opened by King George V.
- 28 June: New Parliament of Southern Ireland meets at Royal College of Science, Dublin. Opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Four unionist MPs representing University of Dublin attend. This is its only formal meeting.
- 8 July: De Valera accepts invitation to meet UK prime minister in London.
- 9 July: Truce signed between IRA and Crown Forces.
- October–December: Negotiations begin between representatives of Dáil Éireann and British government in London for a bilateral agreement. De Valera does not attend.
- 6 December:
- Agreement reached between Irish and British representatives, creating Anglo-Irish Treaty. Key points include creation of an Irish Free State within the Commonwealth, an Oath of Allegiance to the Crown, and retention by the British naval services of certain ports.
  - De Valera accuses Irish delegation of agreeing to demand which falls short of a Republic. Griffith, a signatory, refutes de Valera.
- 16 December: House of Commons accepts Treaty proposal.
- 1922
- 7 January: Dáil Éireann ratifies Treaty following Griffith's motion for approval. Sixty-four in favour; fifty-seven against. De Valera resigns as president of Dáil.

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*Chronology of Events*

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- 10 January:* Griffith elected President of Provisional Government. Michael Collins, a signatory to the Treaty, becomes Minister for Finance. De Valera and fifty-six supporters walk out of Dáil Éireann.
- 14 January:* Provisional Government of Ireland formed for administration of Southern Ireland.
- 31 January:* First unit of new Irish National Army, a former IRA unit, takes possession of Beggars Bush Barracks: the first British military transfer to the new state (formal handover 1 February).
- 10 February:* Irish Free State (Agreement) Act 1922 introduced in British House of Commons by Winston Churchill. Provides for dissolution of Parliament of Southern Ireland and election of a parliament to which the Provisional Government will be responsible.
- 14 April:* Anti-Treaty IRA occupy Four Courts in Dublin to defy Provisional Government.
- 16 June:* Southern Irish general election. Pro-Treaty candidates win 75 per cent of votes.
- 28 June:* National Army, using armaments borrowed from British, bombard anti-Treaty IRA occupying Four Courts, initiating civil war.
- 4 July:* Anti-Treaty IRA capture Skibbereen (Cork) and Listowel (Kerry), establishing 'Munster Republic'.
- 12 August:* Death of Griffith in Dublin.
- 17 August:* Dublin Castle formally handed to National Army. British Army leaves.
- 22 August:* Michael Collins killed in ambush at Béal na Bláth, Cork.
- 9 September:* First meeting of Provisional Parliament (Third Dáil). W. T. Cosgrave elected President of Dáil Éireann and Chairman of the Provisional Government.
- 26 October:* Last meeting of standing committee of Sinn Féin before party de facto dissolves.
- 24 November:* Erskine Childers (Anti-Treaty IRA) executed by firing squad at Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin.



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*Chronology of Events*

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- 5 December:* UK Parliament enacts Irish Free State Constitution Act, legally sanctioning Constitution of the Irish Free State.
- 6 December:* Irish Free State formally comes into existence.
- 7 December:* Parliament of Northern Ireland votes to remain part of the United Kingdom.
- 8 December:* Northern Ireland rejoins United Kingdom.
- 1923 *24 May:* End of Republican military campaign, marking end of civil war.
- 27 August:* Cumann na nGaedheal, the party formed from Sinn Féin's pro-Treaty wing, wins first general election of Irish Free State. Cosgrave's party wins sixty-three seats. De Valera's Sinn Féin claim forty-four. Sinn Féin's representatives abstain from taking their seats until 1927.
- 1924–5 The Irish Boundary Commission, formed as part of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, meets to review delineation of the border in Ireland. Minor changes are proposed and MacNeill resigns. Commission's report is suppressed, making partition permanent in the form provided for in the Government of Ireland Act 1920.

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## Biographies

Leopold S. Amery (1873–1955), academic, journalist, and politician, was born in the North-Western Provinces of India. He attended Harrow School with Winston Churchill, read Classics at Balliol College, Oxford, and later became a Fellow in History at All Souls College, where he worked on the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires, and reputedly acquired competence in some fourteen languages. He covered the build-up to the South African War of 1899–1902 for the *Times* before being called to the bar at the Inner Temple in 1902. His life-long commitment was to the British Empire as an object of patriotic attachment, having been influenced by Alfred Milner and patronised by Joseph Chamberlain. Amery won a seat in the House of Commons in 1911, which he held until 1945. He occupied the colonial secretaryship from 1924 to 1929 and became Secretary of State for India and Burma in Churchill's war ministry. He was a dedicated Zionist and collaborated with the Round Table movement, drafting the agreed text of the Balfour Declaration. Amery was opposed to imperial federation, supporting a looser and evolving structure of association based on equal membership for the Commonwealth. He later sought to strike a balance between the Commonwealth and Europe. He was a prolific author, editing *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, and intervening in national and imperial affairs with polemical works, including *The Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade* (1906), *The Forward View* (1935), and *Thoughts on the Constitution* (1945). His speeches delivered during his tour of the Empire from 1927 to 1928 were collected as *The Empire in the New Era* (1928). In retirement, Amery published a three-volume autobiography, *My Political Life*.

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### *Biographies*

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**Louie Bennett** (1870–1956) was a suffragist, trade unionist, pacifist, journalist, and author. She was raised in a wealthy south Co. Dublin family as a member of the Church of Ireland. She was educated at Alexandra College in Milltown as well as at boarding school in England. In 1911, she co-founded the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation and, later, the Irish Women's Reform League, which addressed wider social issues, including working conditions and education. During the 1913 strike and lockout in Dublin, she appealed for funds to help strikers' families via the Irish Women's Franchise League's paper the *Irish Citizen*, which she took control of in 1920. She also became prominently involved in the Irish Women Workers' Union, founded in 1911 because other unions would not accept female members. Bennett was an active peace campaigner during the First World War. She was both an Irish representative for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the League of Nations. She worked on educational policy for the Irish Trade Union Congress, becoming its first female president in 1932. In 1943, she was elected as a Labour Party member for Dun Laoghaire borough council, later representing Ireland at the International Labour Organisation in Europe. In addition to journalism, she published two novels, *The Proving of Priscilla* (1902) and *A Prisoner of His Word* (1908).

**Edward Carson** (1854–1935) was a barrister and leading Unionist politician. Born in Dublin to Anglican parents, he was educated at Wesley College and then at Trinity College, Dublin, where he read law. He entered parliament in 1892 as a Liberal Unionist member for the University of Dublin. He pursued his legal practice in tandem with parliamentary and ministerial careers. In the former capacity he famously defended the Marquess of Queensberry against Oscar Wilde in a criminal libel action. He was appointed Solicitor General for Ireland in 1892 and Solicitor General for England and Wales in 1900. As a parliamentarian, he was appointed to the Irish Privy Council in 1896 and became leader of the Irish Unionist Alliance in 1910, putting him at the head of the campaign against home rule for Ireland. He soon established himself as the leading advocate of the rights of Ulster. He abhorred the prospect of partition, though his tactics ensured its introduction. His was the first signature to appear on *Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant* in 1912. In 1913, he sanctioned the foundation of the Ulster Volunteers and the Ulster provisional government. He briefly served as Attorney General under Asquith in 1915 and, later, as First Lord of the Admiralty, becoming Minister

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without Portfolio under Lloyd George. In 1921 he refused to lead the new government of Northern Ireland and opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty. He resigned his leadership of the Irish Unionist Party and was made a life peer.

Erskine **Childers** (1870–1922) was an author and political activist who started life as a committed British imperialist and ended it as a dedicated Irish republican. He attended school at Haileybury College in Hertfordshire before studying classics and then law at Trinity College, Cambridge. He qualified as a parliamentary official, and then joined the City Imperial Volunteers (CIV) to fight the Boers in South Africa, after which point his views began to change. By 1910, he had converted to the cause of home rule and resigned his membership of the Liberal Party, becoming involved in 1914 in smuggling armaments from Germany into Ireland with the assistance of his wife, Mary ‘Molly’ Osgood, the disabled daughter of a leading anti-imperialist Boston family. Upon the outbreak of the First World War, he was commissioned as lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, earning the Distinguished Service Cross. He was vexed by wartime developments in Ireland, dismayed by the execution of participants in the 1916 Rebellion, and staunchly opposed the introduction of conscription in Ireland in 1918. He acted as a propagandist for Sinn Féin from 1919 to 1921, was elected to the second Dáil as a Sinn Féin member for the constituency of Kildare–Wicklow, and stood as an anti-Treaty candidate in the 1922 general election. He was executed by Free State forces during the Irish Civil War. In addition to his successful spy novel, *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), Childers published a memoir of his time in the CIV (1901), *The Framework of Home Rule* (1911), *German Influence on British Cavalry* (1911), and several pamphlets on British policy in Ireland.

James **Connolly** (1868–1916) was a socialist, trade unionist, and revolutionary leader. He was born in Edinburgh to Irish parents, where he worked as a labourer before joining the British Army in 1877. He became involved in the local Labour movement in the 1880s where he fell under the influence of John Leslie and Keir Hardie, and secured the position of secretary of the Scottish Socialist Federation in 1892. In 1896 he moved to Dublin as organiser for the Dublin Socialist Club, committing himself to Irish republicanism, and helped establish the Irish Socialist Republican Party. Connolly founded the weekly journal, *Workers’ Republic*, in 1898, and twice sought election to Dublin city council. In 1903 he moved to the

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United States for seven years, getting involved successively in the Socialist Labour Party, the Socialist Party of America, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the Irish Socialist Federation. Returning to Ireland in 1910, he became organiser for the Socialist Party of Ireland and active in the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) under James Larkin, spending time in this official capacity in Belfast. After the 1913 Dublin lockout and general strike, Connolly succeeded Larkin as acting leader of the ITGWU and founded the Irish Citizen Army. By 1915, his opposition to the First World War, the postponement of home rule, and the prospect of partition began to drive him closer to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, with whom, in due course, he conspired to launch and take part in the 1916 Rising. He was executed for his leading role in the rebellion in May. Connolly's journalistic output was prolific. His articles appeared in *Workers' Republic*, *Shan Van Vocht*, *The Harp*, and *Forward*. He also published several books on socialism and Irish history, including *Socialism Made Easy* (1909), *Labour, Nationality and Religion* (1910), *Labour in Irish History* (1910), and *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* (1915).

Albert Venn Dicey (1835–1922), British jurist and publicist, studied classical moderations and then *literae humaniores* at Balliol College, Oxford, graduating in 1858. He was elected to a fellowship at Trinity College, Oxford, but moved to London in 1861 to study for the bar, and was called to Inner Temple in 1863. In 1882 he was elected to the Vinerian professorship of English law at Oxford, from which he retired in 1909. During the course of his tenure at Oxford, he published his widely influential *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (1885), *A Digest of the Law of England with Reference to the Conflict of Laws* (1896), and *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century* (1905). The maintenance of the Union became a dominant commitment after Gladstone's conversion to home rule, leading him to launch a series of polemics against devolution for Ireland in any form. This resulted in the publication of several books on the subject: *England's Case Against Home Rule* (1886), *Letters on Unionist Delusions* (1887), *A Leap in the Dark* (1893), and *A Fool's Paradise* (1913). He also published on Wordsworth and on the Scottish Union.

Alice Stopford Green (1847–1922) was a historian and Irish nationalist. She was born into an Anglican family in Co. Meath and was largely educated by governesses at home. In 1874 her family moved to Chester, where she met the historian John Richard Green, whom she married

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three years later. He died in 1883. Thereafter, Stopford Green dedicated herself to historical writing. She became involved in agitating against the Boer War and colonial policy in Africa at the same time as she became interested in the history of Ireland. Her most important works include *Irish Nationality* (1911), *The Old Irish World* (1912), and *History of the Irish State to 1014* (1925). In 1914 she became involved in importing arms into Ireland on behalf of the Irish Volunteers, but was opposed to the 1916 Rebellion and remained uncomfortable with using violence to achieve independence. She supported the Anglo-Irish Treaty and became a member of the senate of the Irish Free State. Stopford Green published important pamphlets on Irish independence, including *Ourselves Alone in Ulster* (1918) and *The Government of Ireland* (1921).

Arthur **Griffith** (1871–1922) was a writer, journalist, and politician who founded Sinn Féin. The son of a printer, he was educated in north inner-city Dublin, but left school at thirteen to work as a compositor and copywriter. He spent a year as a journalist in South Africa supporting the Boers, but returned to Ireland in 1898 to co-edit the *United Irishman*. An admirer of Parnell in his youth, he became for a time a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, but was uncertain about its use of violence, and soon developed the policies of dual monarchism and abstentionism, which he promoted through propaganda and party organisation. In 1906 he launched the newspaper, *Sinn Féin*; in 1915, after its suppression, he edited *Nationality*, and published other short-lived papers. Although Griffith did not participate in the 1916 Rebellion, he was arrested in its aftermath and imprisoned in Reading jail. He ceded the leadership of Sinn Féin to Éamon de Valera in 1917, becoming vice-president of the party. He was nominated to chair the Irish delegation at the talks to end the Anglo-Irish conflict in 1921. After two months of negotiations, he emerged as a supporter of the offer of dominion status for Ireland and fought to defend the Treaty until his sudden death from a cerebral haemorrhage. He was a prolific commentator on Irish affairs and collected one suggestive group of articles into the controversial volume *The Resurrection of Hungary* (1904), whose argument proved subtly influential in shaping modern Irish politics.

Thomas M. **Kettle** (1880–1916), academic, writer, and politician, attended the Christian Brothers' O'Connell School on Richmond Street in Dublin, and then boarded at Clongowes Wood in Co. Kildare. He graduated from the Royal University of Ireland in Mental and Moral Science

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in 1902, read law at King's Inns, but opted for journalism instead of practising at the bar. He supported the Irish Parliamentary Party and edited *The Nationist*, a paper friendly to the party's cause. Kettle entered the House of Commons as MP for Tyrone East in 1906 and held his seat in 1910. He secured a professorship of national economics but continued to be active in politics and journalism. He campaigned for women's enfranchisement and became involved with the Irish Volunteers in 1914. He was in Belgium upon the outbreak of the First World War where he witnessed German atrocities, prompting him to join the British Forces. He was a committed home ruler and opposed the 1916 Rebellion, though he recognised its impact on national opinion, noting that the rebels would 'go down in history as heroes and martyrs' while he would be remembered as 'a bloody British officer'. He was killed five months later during the Irish assault on Ginchy. Apart from *Home Rule Finance: An Experiment in Justice* (1911), his published writings mostly appeared as collections of essays, including *The Day's Burden* (1910), *The Open Secret of Ireland* (1912), and, posthumously, *Ways of War* (1917).

Robert Lynd (1879–1949) was an essayist and journalist. Born in Belfast to Presbyterian parents, he was educated at the Royal Belfast Academical Institute before studying classics at Queen's University, Belfast, from which he graduated in 1899. He served on the staff of the *Northern Whig* before moving to London, where he wrote successively for *Today*, *Daily News*, *The Nation*, and the *New Statesman*. He also wrote biting pamphlets and a range of books on topical issues, not least about the two islands, including *Rambles in Ireland* (1912), *If the Germans Conquered England* (1917), *Ireland a Nation* (1919), *The Passion of Labour* (1920), *The Pleasure of Ignorance* (1921), *The Sporting Life* (1922), *The Money Box* (1925), *The Orange Tree* (1926), *Dr. Johnson and Company* (1927), and *Searchlights and Nightingales* (1939). Early on, he was influenced by socialist republicanism (he wrote for *The Republic* in 1906–7), becoming more actively engaged with Irish politics as Ulster threatened to capsize home rule. He inveighed against British hypocrisy and imperialism. From his base in Hampstead he emerged as a centrally connected figure in the literary worlds of London and Dublin.

Eoin MacNeill (1867–1945), politician, activist, and academic, was born in Antrim and attended St. Malachy's College in Belfast before studying constitutional history, jurisprudence, and political economy at the Royal University of Ireland. After graduation, he secured a junior clerkship in

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the accountant-general's office in the Dublin law courts. From 1887 he took up the study of Irish, contributing articles to the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* and the *Gaelic Journal*. In 1893 he played a leading role in the establishment of the Gaelic League. MacNeill went on to edit the *Gaelic Journal*, *Fáinne an Lae*, and *An Claidheamh Soluis*. In November 1913 he published 'The North Began', which helped launch the Irish Volunteers. He opposed Redmond's proposal to send Irishmen to the front and joined a splinter group of Irish Volunteers, some of whom, with Irish Republican Brotherhood backing, fomented plans for a rebellion. MacNeill initially supported the proposal to rebel, but later countermanded the orders to mobilise on Easter Sunday. In 1918, he was elected to the first Dáil for Sinn Féin and was appointed Minister for Finance in 1919, before becoming Minister for Industries. He acted as speaker in the second Dáil, generally supported the Treaty, and was elected as pro-Treaty TD for Clare in 1922. He defended government reprisals during the civil war, although his son was killed fighting on the republican side. He was the Irish representative on the 1924–5 Boundary Commission, formed as part of the provisions of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and charged with reviewing the border between North and South. MacNeill resigned from the Commission in November 1925 over its failure to substantially change the delineation of the border and the Commission's report was suppressed. Four days later, he resigned his cabinet post. MacNeill lost his seat in 1927 and returned to academia, retiring from a professorship of early and medieval Irish at University College Dublin in 1941. His academic work focused on the origins of Irish history, the history of St. Patrick, and early Irish law. Among his more popular publications were *Phases of Irish History* (1919) and *Celtic Ireland* (1921).

Ronald McNeill (1861–1934), lawyer, politician, and editor, was born in Devon to parents from Antrim. He attended Harrow and then read Modern History at Christ Church, Oxford, graduating in 1884. Four years later, he was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn, though he rejected the law in favour of journalism. He started as an assistant editor at the *St. James's Gazette* in 1889, and, from 1904 to 1911, for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. He was elected as a Conservative member for the East division of Kent in 1911, a seat he held until 1927. He strenuously opposed the Parliament Act of the same year, and campaigned against home rule, following Carson in his stalwart defence of the rights of Ulster under the Union. In 1927 he was raised to the Peerage as Baron Cushendun. He



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briefly secured the position of chief British representative to the League of Nations, and for five months in 1928 became acting secretary of state for foreign affairs. In addition to *Ulster's Stand for Union* (1922), he published *Home Rule: Its History and Danger* (1907).

Constance **Markievicz** (née Gore-Booth) (1868–1927) was a prominent nationalist, feminist, revolutionary, and socialist. She was born into an Anglo-Irish landed family based in Sligo. From 1893 she studied at the Slade School of Art in London. In 1900 she married Casimir Markievicz, an artist from a wealthy Polish family from Ukraine. She became politically active in the later 1890s, joining the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and later got involved in nationalist politics through her membership of Sinn Féin and Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland). Her immediate political, literary, and artistic circle included W. B. Yeats, Maude Gonne, and John Butler Yeats. In addition to painting, Markievicz acted regularly at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. She also produced journalism, wrote pamphlets, and delivered speeches. With Bulmer Hobson she founded Fianna Éireann, a paramilitary youth organisation, and later joined James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army, in whose ranks she was active during the 1916 Rising. Markievicz was the first woman to be elected to the Westminster parliament in 1918. She vehemently opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty and acted as propagandist for the republican cause before becoming an Irish TD for Fianna Fáil. She held the cabinet position of Minister for Labour between 1919 and 1922. She died of complications from appendicitis.

Patrick **Pearse** (1879–1916) was an educationalist, writer, and insurrectionary. He was born in Dublin to James Pearse, a stone carver from London, and Margaret Pearse, a shop assistant from Dublin. He attended the Christian Brothers' School on Westland Row, and enrolled for a BA in Irish, English, and French at the Royal University of Ireland. He also attended law lectures at the King's Inns and qualified for the bar, though he practised little as a barrister. He joined the Gaelic League in 1896 and founded the New Ireland Literary Society in 1897. Passionate about education, he established St. Enda's school in Cullinstown House in south Dublin in 1908. From 1913, he moved closer to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, under whose auspices he would play a leading role in planning the 1916 Rebellion. He took a prominent organisational part in the Irish Volunteers, leading the ranks of the splinter group which opposed Redmond's support for the British war

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effort. The Curragh mutiny, the Ulster unionist gun-running incident at Larne, and the outbreak of the First World War had a radicalising impact on Pearse and galvanised his commitment to fomenting insurrection. He drafted the Proclamation of the Irish Republic and occupied the role of President throughout the rebellion, surrendering on 29 April. He was condemned to death by firing squad on 2 May and executed the following day. In addition to his educational tract, *The Murder Machine* (1912), and a range of literary and journalistic writings, Pearse published several political pamphlets dedicated, *inter alia*, to reinventing a national tradition. These included *The Coming Revolution* (1913), *The Spiritual Nation* (1916), and *The Sovereign People* (1916).

Horace **Plunkett** (1854–1932), activist, politician, and cooperative movement pioneer, was born into an Irish aristocratic family and educated at Eton and University College, Oxford, where he read History. He returned to Ireland in 1889 following the death of his father, Baron Dunsany, to help run the family estate. After a decade spent in Wyoming, USA, where his views on agricultural reform were formed, he returned to Ireland to establish a cooperative store in Cork and a creamery in Limerick. Having been elected a Unionist MP for Dublin South in 1892, two years later he became president of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. The cooperative movement expanded under its aegis and in 1899 Plunkett was made vice-president of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, a movement which reached across the political divide in both the north and south. As his career progressed, Plunkett switched from constructive unionism to support dominion home rule for Ireland. In 1917 he was appointed to chair the Irish Convention, and in 1919 founded the Irish Dominion League. He accepted a seat in the Irish senate after the establishment of the Free State, but when his house in Foxrock was destroyed in the civil war he resigned his post and resettled in England in 1923. Plunkett was elected to the Royal Society in 1902 and to the Royal Irish Academy in 1929. He authored several pamphlets on agricultural reform and is the author of the pioneering and controversial *Ireland in the New Century* (1904). He also published speeches on major issues, such as conscription in 1918, the radicalisation of Ulster, and Irish affairs in North American contexts.

John **Redmond** (1856–1918), committed home ruler and political leader, was born into a Catholic gentry family in Co. Wexford. He studied at Clongowes Wood and later for two years at Trinity College, Dublin, without

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taking a degree. He became a Parnellite MP for New Ross in 1881 and steadily rose through the ranks of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Having studied law intermittently, he was called to the bar in 1887. On the back of his managerial and oratorical skills he became a leading figure in the pro-Parnell faction after the 1891 split. Within a decade he was elevated to the position of chairman of a reunited party. The elections of January and December 1910 transformed Redmond's fortunes, as the Liberals depended on Irish votes. Redmond abandoned conciliatory tactics to demand the removal of the Lords' veto and introduction of a third Home Rule Bill, which were effected in 1911 and 1912 respectively. He was uneasy in his management of the Third Home Rule crisis of 1912–14, but nonetheless managed to place the Home Rule Act on the statute book in September 1914, albeit with qualifications. Redmond lent his full support to the British war effort and hoped that common participation with Ulster would bring Unionists around to the notion of self-government in an unpartitioned Ireland. The 1916 Rising and its aftermath disappointed his expectations. Redmond's agreement to the temporary partition of Ulster during the talks with Lloyd George in June 1916 haunted the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), which was ill-equipped to deal with the rapid rise of the better organised and pro-suffrage Sinn Féin, which eclipsed the IPP in the 1918 UK general election. His health deteriorated, and in the midst of a final push for a compromise settlement with Ulster in the 1917–18 Irish Convention, Redmond died of heart failure after an operation in London.

**Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington** (1877–1946), feminist, suffragette, nationalist campaigner, and teacher, was born in Cork to a mill owner but moved to Dublin as a child in 1887. She was educated at the Dominican Convent on Eccles Street in Dublin and later studied Modern Languages at the Royal University of Ireland, graduating in 1899. She then took an MA in 1902, and in 1903 married the pacifist, socialist, and feminist, Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. She joined the Irishwomen's Suffrage and Local Government Association, but became more militant in her tactics and in 1908 co-founded the Irish Women's Franchise League, which paralleled the militant activities of the British Women's Social and Political Union. Later, she became a member of the pacifist Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, of which she ultimately became vice-president. From 1912 she co-managed and contributed to *The Irish Citizen*, with which she was intermittently involved until 1920. In 1916, her husband

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was shot on the orders of J. C. Bowen-Colthurst, a British captain, after his attempt to prevent looting during the 1916 Rebellion. Her response is recorded in her speech, *British Militarism As I Have Known It*, published as a pamphlet in 1917. In 1919, she was elected as a Sinn Féin candidate to Dublin corporation and took the republican side in the civil war, campaigning across the USA for funds to relieve families of republican soldiers. In 1926 she was appointed to the executive of the new Fianna Fáil party. She lectured widely and continued to publish journalism in the *Irish World*. She also wrote for *An Phoblacht* and its successor *Republican File*. She studied the Soviet system of government first-hand in 1930 and, in 1937, actively campaigned against the recently promulgated Irish Constitution. During the course of her life, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington was imprisoned and went on hunger strike on numerous occasions in connection with her activism.

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## Note on the Texts

The texts collected in this volume are reproduced where possible from their original sources or first editions rather than from subsequent editions. These sources include pamphlets, newspapers, and monographs. Details of original publications are footnoted at the start of each text. Typographical errors in the originals have been corrected, though punctuation has been retained. Spelling has been made uniform within each chapter and the use of accents for Irish nouns, like Sinn Féin, has been made consistent throughout the volume. Footnotes in the original texts are distinguished from editorial notes: the editors' notes are marked sequentially with Arabic numerals while authors' are signalled by using asterisks and daggers. Comments on author footnotes are contained within the note and introduced by '*Editorial note:*'.

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